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THE COUNTERREVOLUTION IN MILITARY AFFAIRS

BY RALPH PETERS

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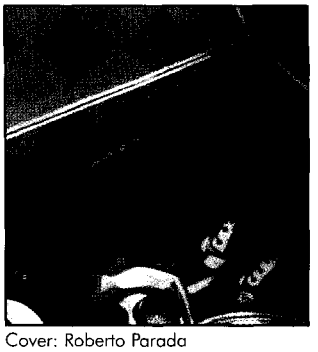

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Wisconsin Hurricanes and Other FEMA News

A SCRAPBOOK pal emails with important emergency-preparedness news:

"I'm writing from Wisconsin with an urgent message for my fellow Cheeseheads: There's no need to evacuate. FEMA's in charge!

"I was clicking around the Internet from my suburban Milwaukee home," our correspondent advised, "when I came upon an eye-catching advertisement: 'Wisconsin Hurricanes: Don't be a victim of the next big storm. Learn more now!' Having seen all of the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina, and being at that very moment in Wisconsin, I wasted no time following the link.

"Imagine my relief when I was taken to a website from the Federal Emergency Management Agency called *Floodsmart.gov.* A wave of reassurance washed over me as I remembered seeing a speech given not long ago by Michael Chertoff, who runs the Department of Homeland Security and has authority over FEMA. Chertoff predicted: 'In the next weeks you will be seeing that we come forward with some specific plans' to improve FEMA. And he added, 'We do anticipate some very significant, far-reaching changes in FEMA to get ourselves ready for hurricane season in 2006.'

"Chertoff didn't say it directly, but I'm pretty sure that raising awareness of potential Wisconsin hurricanes must be part of that plan. I did some research and found out that there has never been a hurricane in Wisconsin. My motto, though (like the Boy Scouts), is: *Be prepared!* (I have another motto: *You never know!*) I'll bet Chertoff was a Boy Scout. I think FEMA should adopt my motto—either one, actually. I learned from one of the 'Fast Facts' on the front page of FEMA's *Floodsmart.gov* site that 'almost 25 percent of all flood insurance claims come from areas with minimal flood risk.' See? You never know!!

"These FEMA reforms are encouraging. I think Chertoff is a big sandbag to the rising tide of anti-FEMA vitriol. In that same speech, he said: 'It's not pleasant to see FEMA being made the butts of joke.'

"Well, the days of FEMA being the butts of joke are over. Be prepared!

"Yours on guard in Wauwatosa." ♦

Memoirs of Oprah

Last week Oprah Winfrey confessed that her critics had been "absolutely right" to challenge her commitment to truthfulness after she made a public and sweeping defense of James Frey, the memoirist whose Oprah Book Club-selected *A Million Little Pieces* was exposed by "The Smoking Gun" website as containing a million little exaggerations, distortions, and lies. The press ecstatically praised the Big O for taking her lumps after she confronted Frey on her January 26 show, citing page numbers and contrary evidence, demanding to know the real story behind several episodes recounted in his drugologue redemption story.

Even THE SCRAPBOOK was impressed by Oprah's willingness to admit she was wrong and play disciplinarian to her wayward author, but the show itself seemed at times a similarly slick bit of narrative construction. Oprah started by opening a can of whoop-ass on Frey, then brought on "some of the country's leading journalists" to have their turn, and finally ushered the episode to a neat close with Frey claiming that the exposure of his lies had made him a better person and taught him an important lesson.

In addition, the show was—surprise—less than a ringing endorsement of intellectual seriousness. "Leading journalist" Frank Rich of the *New York Times* tried drawing a connection between James Frey's fabrications and the supposed fabrications Rich believes brought the United States to invade Iraq. Stanley Crouch appeared in a video montage, declaring that "Oprah Winfrey is number one, the queen of good will in the United States."

The book people were just as unctuous. Publisher Nan Talese seemed offended by the suggestion that an editor might ask a writer questions to ferret out the veracity of over-the-top stories. She even seemed to agree with Frey that memoirs like his inhabit some parallel universe in which the laws of fact and fiction are suspended.

But what took the cake for us was the appearance on the show of superannuated columnist Richard Cohen, who showed off his famous independent streak by immediately making nice with Oprah once in her highness's presence. We're sorry, but it won't be possible for us to concede that Oprah has licked her truth problem until she stops referring to the likes of Rich and Cohen as the country's "leading journalists." ♦

You're (Hardly Ever) Fired!

Thanks to new federal regulations, unions now file extensive disclosure reports with the Department of Labor allowing us to learn what members' dues are being spent on. The National Education Association, for instance, has given some $65 million, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, to left-liberal groups like Jesse Jackson's Rainbow PUSH Coalition, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, and AIDS Walk

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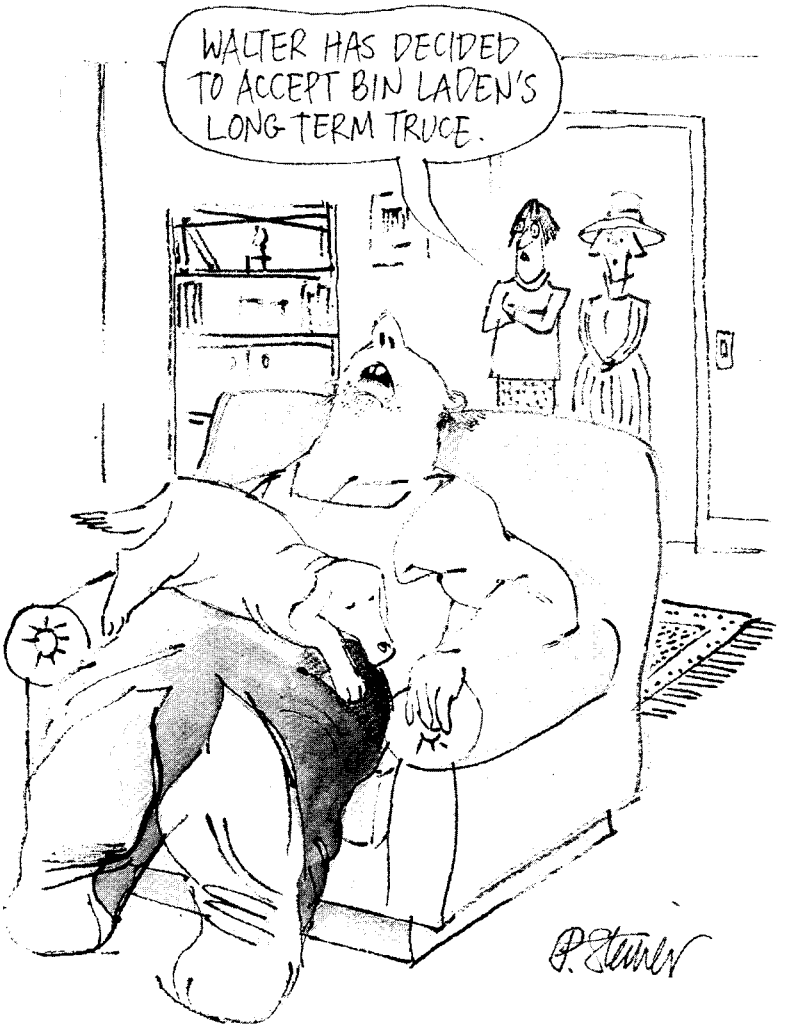

Washington. Members' dues also go to pay the salaries of NEA employees, which are about double what the average teacher makes.

What do the teachers get in return? Job security, it turns out. The teachers' unions have made it practically impossible to fire teachers. A recent report from the New Teacher Project found that in a one-year sample of five large, urban school districts, only four teachers had been formally terminated for poor performance. That's four out of 70,000. Which, if our own long-ago math teacher taught us correctly, must mean that something like 99.995 percent of American teachers are competent. Either that, or the NEA is protecting an awful lot of deadwood. ♦

Annals of Liberal Paranoia

From a front-page story in the *New York Times*, "After Subpoenas, Internet Searches Give Some Pause, " January 25, 2006:

> Kathryn Hanson, a former telecommunications engineer who lives in Oakland, Calif., was looking at BBC News online last week when she came across an item about a British politician who had resigned over a reported affair with a "rent boy."
>
> It was the first time Ms. Hanson had seen the term, so, in search of a definition, she typed it into Google. As Ms. Hanson scrolled through the results, she saw that several of the sites were available only to people over 18. She suddenly had a frightening thought. Would Google have to inform the government that she was looking for a rent boy—a young male prostitute?
>
> Ms. Hanson, 45, immediately told her boyfriend what she had done. "I told him I'd Googled 'rent boy,' just in case I got whisked off to some Navy prison in the dead of night," she said. ♦

Breindel Award

Applications are invited for the eighth annual Eric Breindel Award for Excellence in Journalism. The $20,000 prize is named for longtime *New York Post* editor and columnist (and WEEKLY STANDARD contributor) Eric Breindel, who died in 1998 at the age of 42. It is presented each year to the columnist, editorialist, or reporter whose work best reflects the spirit of Breindel's too-short career: love of country, concern for the preservation and integrity of democratic institutions, and resistance to the evils of totalitarianism.

Last year's winner was Claudia Rosett, journalist-in-residence at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, for her peerless reporting on the scandalous palm-greasing and bribery engaged in by Saddam Hussein's Iraqi regime under the U.N. Oil-for-Food program.

For further information about this year's Breindel Award, please contact Germaine Febles at 212-843-8031 or *gfebles@rubenstein.com*. ♦

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Casual

Unconfirmable Me

In my younger and more impressionable days I used occasionally to daydream about ending my career in journalism with a little finishing canter of public service.

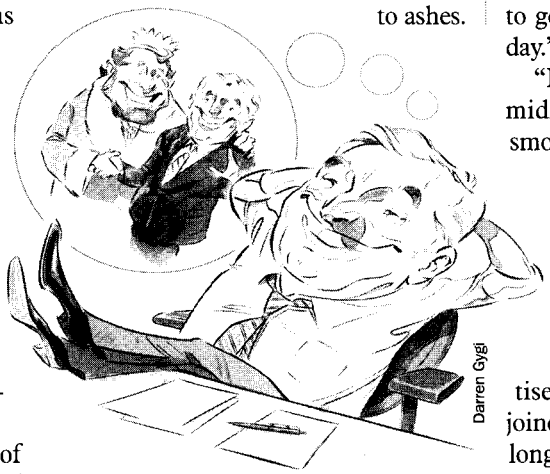
To be specific, a diplomatic appointment was what I had in mind. I could well imagine some White House functionary phoning me out of my torpor one wet afternoon with these words: "Phil, for your decades of selfless and uncritical service to the political interests of two generations of the Bush family, the president has asked me to inquire whether you would be willing to accept an ambassadorship."

Some people agonize over what to do with their future lottery winnings; I would ponder the merits of this or that American embassy. I knew, of course, that the plums—London, Paris, Tokyo—were out of the question, and I certainly didn't crave a strategic assignment (Moscow, Tel Aviv, Beijing).

No, I had in mind a destination of some minor importance with a hint of intrigue (East Berlin) or an interesting place that gets along well with Washington (Nicosia). In the absence of a suitable embassy, I was also willing to consider some amenable post of the second rank: consul-general in Edinburgh, say, or delegate to some UNESCO commission.

In those days, the business of Senate confirmation seemed more like a lark than a painful, even insurmountable, obstacle. In the Eisenhower era, J. William Fulbright of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee used to ask wealthy campaign contributors to identify the prime minister of the country to which they had been appointed ambassador. I remember Sen. George ("Declare victory and go home") Aiken of Vermont asking one would-be diplomat to name the sheriff who shot Billy the Kid (Pat Garrett).

Such questions would not have been troublesome to an autodidact such as myself; but in 1987, when Judge Robert Bork was nominated to the Supreme Court, the tone and tenor of the process underwent a transformation, and not for the better. I can still remember the moment when I realized not only that Judge Bork's cause was doomed, but that my visions of public service prior to retirement were reduced to ashes.


Darren Gygi

It was when Sen. Howell Heflin of Alabama—known to his constituents as the Towering Bowl of Jell-O—asked Bork, in all seriousness, why he wore a beard.

It was bad enough that such an inane question could be asked without laughter breaking out. Worse still was the fact that Judge Bork's response was added to the bill of particulars against him. I knew, in an instant, that my own inimitable appearance, wardrobe, hairdo, hobbies, choice of automobile, leisure interests, and various clubs and organizations could never pass Senate scrutiny.

I had already worked out means of rationalizing intemperate remarks in print—*I was young, Senator, and didn't fully appreciate the breadth of your statesmanship when I wrote that*—and knew that I could plausibly deny any insensitive jokes told in the elevator. But explaining my membership in something like the Society of King Charles the Martyr, or my ownership of a white 1967 Morris Minor sedan, or the monocle I purchased in the summer of 1978 (and keep in a desk drawer) to the satisfaction of a dozen hostile legislators was clearly impossible.

My first intimation of trouble came in my reporting days. I always noticed that when somebody was arrested—whether for a violent crime or a white-collar transgression—the people next door would be canvassed for stories about the accused. I could well imagine the anecdotes that might stick in the memories of my neighbors:

"He told my wife that the best day to go shopping was Super Bowl Sunday."

"He would come outside around midnight, stand in his driveway, and smoke a cigar."

"He once told me that he wasn't giving his mother a Christmas present because she hadn't used the one he gave her last year."

"What was that?"

"A cemetery plot."

Where once I might have advertised myself as a typical American joiner with multiple memberships and long lists of clubs and organizations—none of this "bowling alone" business for me—I would face the example of poor Judge Alito, whose unremembered check made out to Concerned Alumni of Princeton led to a full day of angry accusations, close questioning, personal insults, and threatened subpoenas.

Most of my associations, I believe, are pretty innocuous—Virginia Historical Society, Association of Literary Scholars and Critics, American Council on Germany, etc.—but a few might be considered eccentric (the aforementioned SKCM), regionally suspect (Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War), or prove awkward to describe (I am listed in *Who's Who* as an "honorary whip [of the] Wolver Beagles").

I dread to think what Teddy Kennedy would do with that one.

Philip Terzian

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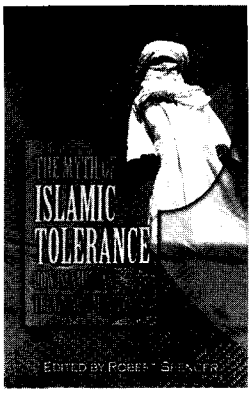
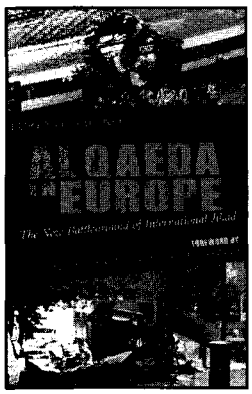


"Robert Spencer has here assembled a collection of documents devastating to PC myth and multiculturalist wishful thinking. Anyone concerned about the dangers of politically motivated distortions of Islamic theology and history should not miss this explosive and enlightening volume." **—Jeffrey Rubin, Editor, *Conservative Book Club***



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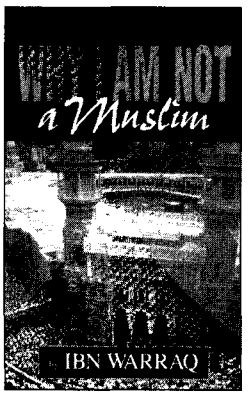
"[A]n impressive compendium that meticulously documents the terror that is jihad...an unparalleled documentary history of nearly 14 centuries of jihad, and of the non-Muslims who have been subjugated as a result of that relentless campaign. His account is a sober warning of the mortal challenge posed to free societies by the ongoing jihad of the militants. Scholars as well as general readers owe a debt of gratitude to Bostom for making available a number of very important texts." ***—National Review***



WHY I AM NOT A MUSLIM

Ibn Warraq

Foreword by R. Joseph Hoffmann

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"My favorite book on Islam is the rationalist critique Why I Am Not a Muslim."

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—Salisbury Review

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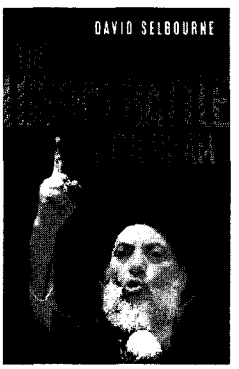

In this comprehensive study of the Islamic revival from 1947 to the present, historian David Selbourne traces in detail the complex causes motivating the rise of Muslim fundamentalism in many countries and the West's largely uncomprehending response to it. Writing neither from the "left" nor from the "right," Selbourne pieces together up-to-date information from more numerous sources than in any other work on the subject. He highlights the grotesque role that some sections of the Western media have played and seeks to do justice to the Islamist cause, demonstrating how many of the real issues of the Islamic revival have been evaded.

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May I See Some ID?

Adam Wolfson's "Survival of the Evolution Debate" (Jan. 16) was generally insightful, but he seriously misstates the views of both the Discovery Institute and proponents of intelligent design on some key points. After asking if the intelligent design debate is really a scientific one, Wolfson claims that "it is the mantra of the Discovery Institute . . . that the controversy between intelligent design and natural selection should be a part of any science curriculum." Not so.

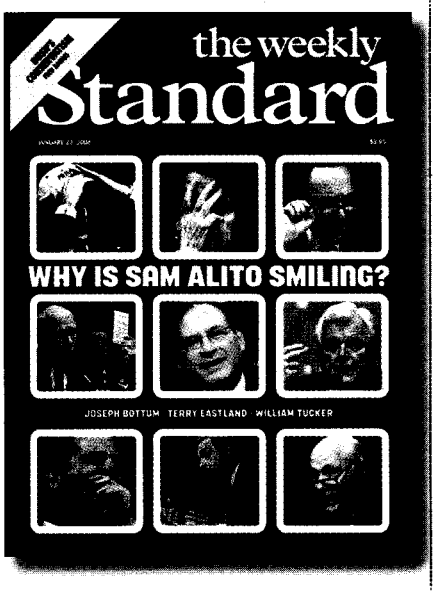
Although the Discovery Institute supports the right of teachers to discuss intelligent design (ID) voluntarily, it has vigorously opposed efforts to mandate ID's inclusion in public school science curricula, including the Dover, Pennsylvania, school district policy that Wolfson cites. The Discovery Institute opposed Dover's policy from the start. Instead, we favor the more modest goal of teaching students about some of the well-documented scientific problems of neo-Darwinism, an approach already adopted by states such as Ohio.

Second, Wolfson cites Leon Kass as faulting ID proponents for claiming that "the only possible answer" to the issues they raise "is a Designer-God." Leon Kass is an admirable and perceptive thinker on bioethics, but he is misinformed here. Leading ID proponents have long emphasized that scientific evidence cannot tell whether an intelligent cause detected in nature is God. Such a conclusion, if it is to be drawn, requires additional arguments from philosophy and metaphysics. Kass also seems to imply that ID proponents merely poke holes in neo-Darwinism and then default to intelligent design. In reality, though, they seek to offer negative evidence against all available materialist explanations (e.g., neo-Darwinism, self-organizational models) as well as positive evidence for intelligent design.

John G. West
Discovery Institute
Washington, D.C.

Not Like the Others

After rightly criticizing celebrities for their farcical accusations against President Bush, The Scrapbook commits a similar offense against Pope John Paul II by comparing his request



that the life of killer-rapist Roger Keith Coleman be spared to the claims made by Amnesty International, *Time*, and the *New York Times* that Coleman was innocent ("The Guilty Martyr," Jan. 23). The pope, unlike those other entities, never suggested anything about Coleman's innocence. Catholicism teaches that the death penalty, through witnessing the value of life by treating murder with deadly seriousness, can be just and necessary. But John Paul II noted that in our day capital punishment often is not necessary and that our "culture of death," by radically devaluing life, has robbed capital punishment of its teaching potential. The man The Weekly Standard called "John Paul the Great" was hardly the type simply to follow the *New York Times* in the latest *cause célèbre*. The late pope's opposition to the death penalty was as different from that of those in your line-up as George Bush is from a *Team America* puppet.

Tom Hoopes
National Catholic Register
North Haven, Conn.

Textbook Fabrications

As a high school history teacher, I was pleased to relate The Scrapbook's 75 year-old breaking news story ("Upton Sinclair's Ethics," Jan. 16) to my students. Seven years ago, as a new teacher, I was hoodwinked by our textbook into believing the innocence of Sacco and Vanzetti. I did as many do, passing this knowledge along to my students as if it were gospel. Then I read Paul Johnson's *The History of the American People*, and I began to share my concerns with the textbook portrayal of the case. Now I can gladly report that the hundred or so high school seniors I teach each year will hear the truth.

Charlie Ebright
Wichita, Kan.

• • •

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the weekly Standard

The Lessons of Alito

With Samuel Alito about to be confirmed, it's time to take stock of this particular episode in the making of a justice, the nation's 110th. Bear in mind that Alito was not President Bush's first choice to succeed Sandra Day O'Connor. The estimable John Roberts was, but when Chief Justice William Rehnquist died, Bush decided to redesignate Roberts for the center seat. That meant finding another nominee for O'Connor's seat.

As it happened, Bush surprised the world by naming White House Counsel Harriet Miers. The Miers nomination proved a major blunder. Bush had opted for a person he knew well who (obviously) was also a female (he decided to make that a job requirement) and who, lacking a paper trail, seemed to White House aides more "confirmable" (recall that Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid early on praised the choice). Yet it quickly became obvious that Miers's qualifications were thin—she had little experience in constitutional law—and there was reasonable doubt that her understanding of judicial conservatism went much beyond the president's own bromides on the subject. Her nomination began taking on water and was about to sink when Miers wisely asked out, thus giving the president another chance to choose O'Connor's successor. Without delay, Bush selected Alito, a federal judge of 15 years experience, whose qualifications no one doubted, whose judicial philosophy is manifestly that of a conservative, a lawyer who has actually stated that the Constitution does not encompass a right to abortion. As the replacement for O'Connor, Alito was surely a trade-up, so to speak, a net plus for judicial conservatism.

While the president erred with the Miers nomination, he deserves credit for getting back on track and choosing in Alito a jurist of the kind he long has promised. Defenders of the Miers nomination—very few in the end—were wrong to say that its withdrawal would weaken the president politically, especially with respect to judicial nominations. They were wrong to warn that someone of Alito's stature and judicial philosophy might not be confirmed, since Senate Democrats would be especially pumped to oppose such a nomination, seeing it as an act of capitulation to the conservatives who had so strongly objected to Miers.

In the end, a big lesson from the search for O'Connor's successor—a lesson of both the Roberts and Alito nominations—is that quality matters. Democrats were unable to convince anyone but themselves that the nation must maintain the Court's "balance" by having someone like O'Connor succeed O'Connor (assuming, that is, such a person could ever be found, her method of judging being entirely unpredictable). In Roberts and then in Alito, the country saw smart, experienced lawyers who could handle anything thrown at them—without losing their cool.

Another lesson is that quality nominees can make a winning case for judicial conservatism. In making clear the fundamental distinction between law and politics that lies at the heart of their judicial philosophy, both Roberts and Alito articulated a theme that Senate Democrats proved unable to counter effectively. And meanwhile, their cries of wolf, subjected to the immediate, withering scrutiny of informed commentators, didn't resonate. Polls taken after the hearings found that public support for Alito had actually increased.

There is another lesson from the two nominations, which is that Democrats have succeeded in making Supreme Court nominations a matter of partisan politics. In another era, John Roberts, approved by a vote of 78 to 22, would have been confirmed with only a handful nays. So would have Sam Alito, against whom, as we go to press, as many as 40 votes will be cast, all by Democrats.

As much as we would like to see the country return to a time when senators tended to defer to the judicial nominations of the president, opposing only in truly exceptional cases, there is no going back to that era, not so long as Democrats insist on measuring nominations ideologically. For this reason, senatorial elections will remain highly relevant to the making of judges and justices. After all, who can doubt where the Alito nomination would be today if Democrats had been in control of the Senate? It is striking that the Alito nomination is already an issue in some 2006 races, used by Republican incumbents against Democratic challengers (in Pennsylvania, Missouri, and Arizona) and by Republican candidates hoping to win seats in red states (West Virginia and Florida).

The Democrats have yet to find a red state where they can make the case for what might be called "living-Constitution" jurists. But there can be no doubt that the debate over judicial selection will intensify both this year and again in 2008. What's unknown, of course, is whether Bush's last years in office will offer him another opportunity to pick a justice. If so, it's not too early to say that he should select another in the mold of Roberts and Alito.

—Terry Eastland, for the Editors

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Iran or Bust

The defining test of Bush's war presidency.

BY JEFFREY BELL

EVENTS ARE CONVERGING to elevate the nuclear crisis with Iran into the central crisis of the Bush presidency. War presidents are graded not by circumstances they inherit, including those that lead to war. They are judged by how they react to those circumstances.

Franklin Roosevelt as a war president is defined not by the attack on Pearl Harbor, but by the radical war aim he laid out against Japan and Germany in the wake of Pearl Harbor—unconditional surrender—and by his relentless and successful pursuit of that war aim until the day he died.

When Lyndon Johnson became president in November 1963, he inherited a chaotic situation in South Vietnam due to an ill-advised military coup against the civilian-led Saigon government countenanced by his predecessor, John F. Kennedy. As vice president, LBJ had fought to prevent the anti-Diem coup, which proved to be a ghastly mistake. Yet Johnson as a war president receives a failing grade for one reason only: When he left office in January 1969 the United States was in a far weaker geopolitical position, in Vietnam and globally, than it had been when Johnson took office.

In the same way, long after the present wartime president leaves office, his success or failure will be judged not by the enemy attacks of 9/11 but by how he responded to those attacks—and by whether his responses prove right or wrong.

In response to 9/11, Bush and his administration put down clear markers and bright lines. The days of treating terrorism as a criminal activity, to be solved primarily by the work of policemen, prosecutors, judges, and juries, were over. The president served notice that foreign governments providing safe haven for terrorist enemies of the United States would be treated as if those governments were mounting terrorist operations themselves—that is, as enemies of the United States in a world war. And he announced that rogue states would not be allowed to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

To achieve these war aims, Bush proclaimed two new doctrines. The new military doctrine, a marked departure from the Cold War doctrine of deterrence, was that of preemption: We would no longer wait for military mobilizations or attacks before striking against a growing terrorist threat. Preemption comprised a series of military options up to and including invasion, occupation, and regime change.

The new geopolitical doctrine was the promotion of democracy as a central U.S. policy goal around the world but with particular focus on the Arab and Islamic cultures. Without political reform in the Islamic world, Bush argued, eliminating one set of terrorists would achieve no more than a respite before terrorism's next wave.

By the time of the January 2002 State of the Union speech that singled out an "axis of evil"—Iraq, Iran, and North Korea—as the most dangerous of the world's surviving rogue states, Bush had successfully defined his response to 9/11. He had also laid out a coherent U.S. military and political strategy to deal with the protracted world war he believed us to be in. You could disagree with the strategy, and many did. But no one could deny that such a strategy had been laid out.

In the years since 9/11, the Bush war strategy has yielded some undeniable successes: the turning of Pakistan from a fomenter of terrorism and of nuclear proliferation into a semi-collaborator of the United States; the ousting of the Taliban government and its al Qaeda mentors in Afghanistan; and the renunciation by Libya of its nuclear program, to name three. Claims can be made as well for the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon followed by free elections and for the advance of democratic reforms in a number of other Islamic countries.

Beginning with the March 2003 invasion, the war in Iraq has taken center stage as the toughest, best-defined test of the Bush war strategies: in a nutshell, military preemption and regime change, followed by democratic reform in the wake of terrorist challenges from Sunni revanchists and Islamist terrorists swearing allegiance to al Qaeda. Iraq has tested every element of the Bush war strategy. Until fairly recently, it seemed plausible that the success or failure of Bush's global strategies, and thus of the Bush presidency itself, would hinge on U.S. success or failure in Iraq.

With the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as president of Iran last June, this began to change. There may or may not be elements in the Iranian government willing to accommodate the emerging Shiite-majority government in Iraq. There may even be factions in Iran that would hesitate before providing a direct challenge to Bush's preemption doctrine. If such factions exist, however, they are irrelevant today. Ahmadinejad, for whatever reasons, appears determined to force Bush to live up to his post-9/11 strategy or tacitly admit that he has abandoned it in the face of difficulties in Iraq.

One by one, Iran's radical president is removing the pretexts for U.S. inaction or delay. Could we live with a nuclear Iran? Not one led by a man who says the Jewish Holocaust never happened and muses about the possibility of correcting that Nazi failure by dropping a nuclear bomb on Israel. Is there a way to take advantage of the fact that the Shiite wing of Islamism has not taken part, so far, in a shooting war with the United States or its allies? Not with an Iranian president who convenes a terror summit in Damascus with Bashar Assad, the all-but-proven

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murderer of the former premier of Lebanon, and with Hamas, the avatar of *Sunni* terrorism in the Palestinian territories. Given these events, it would no longer be shocking to see Ahmadinejad at a summit with Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the head of al Qaeda in Iraq and an advocate of the mass murder of Shiites as a tactic in the war against U.S. forces and the Shiite-led Iraqi government.

Reports out of Iran suggest Ahmadinejad may see himself as a central actor in an Islamic apocalypse. A man with this mindset might see provoking the United States as forwarding the end game of Allah. And he might not fear provoking Israel into an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities that could trigger convulsions throughout the Middle East and beyond.

Much depends on how far Iran is from putting together its first nuclear warhead. Some reports, particularly those traced to Israeli intelligence, point to the very near future. Even if the ominous date turns out to be much further away, Ahmadinejad shows little sign of pausing for breath. Indeed, the Hamas sweep of the Palestinian parliamentary elections is no doubt being seen in Tehran as a vindication of Ahmadinejad's Damascus terror summit days earlier.

If the Bush administration is developing a military option to deal with Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons —a form of preemption—it is doing so very quietly. On the pure military level, this is, of course, appropriate. If you had to pick one flaw in the superbly organized U.S. invasion of Iraq, as Jed Babbin recently pointed out, it would be the lack of an element of surprise.

But what is starting to become clear is that Ahmadinejad's seemingly reckless challenge will extract, and is meant to extract, a cost in U.S. standing among our friends and allies, in Iraq and across the globe. A war president who can be portrayed as having given up on the core of his own war strategy will be seen as a leader considerably less capable of deterring our terrorist enemies, wherever they are and whatever it is they are plotting. ♦

Reading Saddam's Email

What to do with an enemy's hard drives.

BY MICHAEL TANJI

STEPHEN F. HAYES has written extensively in these pages about a large cache of documents and digital media captured in the course of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. As a former intelligence officer who dealt with digital media exploitation and analysis issues at the Defense Intelligence Agency for nearly four years (2001 to 2005), I am prohibited from speaking publicly about what these documents may contain. What I can do is share my professional opinion on how one might solve some of the major problems associated with media exploitation.

Let us assume hypothetically that the United States has overthrown a hostile regime, and a vast amount of paper and digital media has been looted or otherwise removed from the regime's ministries, industrial centers, and other facilities. A great deal of this material has been obtained by the U.S. military and eventually the U.S. intelligence services.

Because of the lack of context—reliable information about where each item was obtained, who it belonged to, and so on—U.S. intelligence is faced with trying to make sense of a massive, amorphous heap of paper and digital data.

The demands are tremendous. Combat commanders need actionable intelligence so they can turn around and capture or kill more of the enemy (and obtain still more media to exploit). But technical expertise and high-end equipment are hard to come by. So is good, trustworthy linguistic support. Subject matter experts are by and large still back in Washington. Given the problems, how does U.S. intelligence perform deep analysis on data that clearly need it?

The process of exploitation begins with the recognition that neither human intelligence nor signals intelligence is the be-all and end-all. Human sources can lie. They can hide parts of the truth. Unwitting dupes in a deception scheme can honestly tell you what they *think* is the truth. Intercepted signals generally reveal only part of the intelligence picture. In a complex web of bad guys, tapping the phones of one or two leaves a lot of gaps, especially when your adversary is a whole network of webs.

Digital media, on the other hand, are less prone to be a means of deception, and even one node of a network can reveal a significant amount about the entire network. Think about the data that you keep on your computers at work and at home. Unless you write fiction for a living, these are the most accurate and factual data that can be obtained about you (short of reading your mind). The memos and letters you write, the financial information you calculate, the websites you visit, and the people you email or instant-message—all this is a gold mine for anyone looking to know who you are, what you do, and with whom you cavort. Now imagine having access to the same data about your adversary.

Enter "computer forensics." Exploiting paper documents is a relatively simple matter of reading and, if necessary, translating. Exploiting dig-

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ital media is another story. Before you can read the data, you have to find it.

Outside the intelligence field, computer forensics is the process by which data are extracted, preserved, and analyzed for pertinence and meaning. The computer forensics community has worked very hard to bring its practices up to the level portrayed on TV in shows like *CSI*, where digital evidence is now accepted in court as much as fingerprints or blood splatters.

It stands to reason that the same people, tools, and methods used in computer crime labs are also used in intelligence efforts. However, the courtroom-centric, linear, law-enforcement mindset is actually a hindrance to effective exploitation for purposes of intelligence. A military intelligence unit is not interested in going to court; it is interested in helping soldiers put steel on target. This is not to say that a law enforcement approach has no use in the larger intelligence business (for example, in counterintelligence investigations), but if the goal is good data fast, then what is good for cops is not good for soldiers.

Assume our hypothetical hostile regime was a fairly large country with a population around 25 million. It was not the most technically advanced nation in the world, but it had ministries and industries and was believed to have advanced weapons capabilities. All these needed computers to function. How much data does this translate into? Consider some rough calculations.

One floor of an average-sized university library full of academic journals contains about 100 gigabytes of data, the size of a large but not uncommon hard drive. The data in 100 such hard drives are comparable to the print holdings of the Library of Congress. Care to guess whether our formerly hostile regime had more than 100 computers?

As if sheer quantity of data were not problem enough, remember that the materials have almost no supporting contextual information. A computer forensics examiner in a crime lab generally has access to the investigators, knows the nature of the crime, and knows the most common places to look for evidence. A piece of evidence comes to him in a plastic bag with a tag on it saying where it was found, what kind of computer it came out of, and so on.

On the battlefield there is no time to "bag-and-tag" evidence. You find something that looks useful; you grab it, secure it, and move on. When the mission is over, you head to the tent where the Military Intelligence guys hang out and drop off your goods, covered in dust and a lot worse for wear. Under such conditions, context beyond a label reading "hard drive found on Monday" is scarce.

You have a huge store of data and only the slightest idea where it came from, a vague idea of what to look for, and you must do the job to a standard of proof mindlessly imported from law enforcement and far exceeding what is necessary for your work. Is it any wonder that some consider the job hopeless? How *can* we hope to make any real sense of this mass of stuff?

Technology can help. First, when data come without any meaningful context, we have to re-create it after the fact. We begin to do this by building lists of keywords, phrases, personalities, and other data that pertain to the topics of interest to our intelligence services. These lists can easily include tens of thousands of terms, names, figures, and data formats.

The next step is to create a forensically sound process to spin off the more meaningful pieces of data (user-created documents, emails, spreadsheets, etc.) while leaving behind data that have less utility (files associated with the operating system and software applications). Let's call this our forensic centrifuge.

Ideally our centrifuge will be built out of a cluster of computers: dozens of cheap processors networked together and scaled to rival a supercomputer in power. Cluster computers have been used by academia and the government for years, notably in places like NASA and the Department of Energy.

Computer programs written to take advantage of the multiprocessor capabilities of the centrifuge will extract the easy-to-obtain data files, recover deleted files and those that have been obfuscated by various means, and find the data stored in web browsers, email software, and other programs. There are commercial applications that do this, but our applications will have to be custom-made.

Once we have this notional system, we can aim it at our amorphous heap of captured data. The result should be large but much more meaningful subsets of data that we can be reasonably assured were created by members of the former regime. The problem of authenticity that sometimes complicates the exploitation of paper documents virtually does not arise.

While we now have all the meaningful data we can obtain, there is one more step to take before we can overlay what is called our "contextual appliqué." Our extracted data files must be compared with files of the same type—another computer process easily crafted—for both physical and content similarities. Through this process we should be able to determine things like:

- the names of people who drafted, edited, and were expected to receive memorandums, letters, and orders, and sometimes which computers they worked on;
- which computers were likely networked together, within the same ministry or between trusted associates;
- discussions between former regime elements in the form of both memorandums and email exchanges, as well as the personal thoughts revealed in private letters between confidants; and
- the foreign contacts of former regime elements in the form of email addresses and website data.

This information and more can be used to reconstruct both the physical and social networks of our former hostile regime. It can show who was talking to whom and who was work-

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ing on what prior to the war. Our contextual appliqué is now complete, and many gaps left by insufficient prewar human and signals intelligence can be filled in.

The system just described for sorting and organizing data is notional, but not fanciful. The technology exists, the mental wherewithal exists, and the contract vehicles exist. The problem of finding enough qualified, trusted Arabic speakers and translators is great, but familiar. If we want to do this, we know how. If we want to do it fast, and provide sufficient resources, we can see significant results this year.

Adapting widely accepted technical methodologies to the unique challenges our intelligence services face is merely good sense. Modern technologies could be put to good use by the intelligence community to solve data extraction, processing, analysis, and display problems, if only certain elements in the community could get over the "not-invented-here" syndrome. There are signs of progress, but it is slow. Let's face it: You've probably got more powerful software on your computer at home than the average intelligence analyst has on the job.

There is of course a strong political aspect to media exploitation. Which end of the political spectrum will come out ahead is not clear going in. We could very well have in our possession ample material to support all the reasons the public was told justified going to war—or we could find the opposite, or find there are no clear conclusions to be drawn. But unless we look, we will always be faced—in the immortal words of Donald Rumsfeld—with a huge cache of "unknown unknowns."

After all the detainees have been interrogated, and all of the sand at suspected facilities has been sifted and tested, the only way finally to close the book on what our hypothetical former hostile regime was up to is to analyze every last reliable source of data available to us. That is, if we are really interested in the truth. ♦

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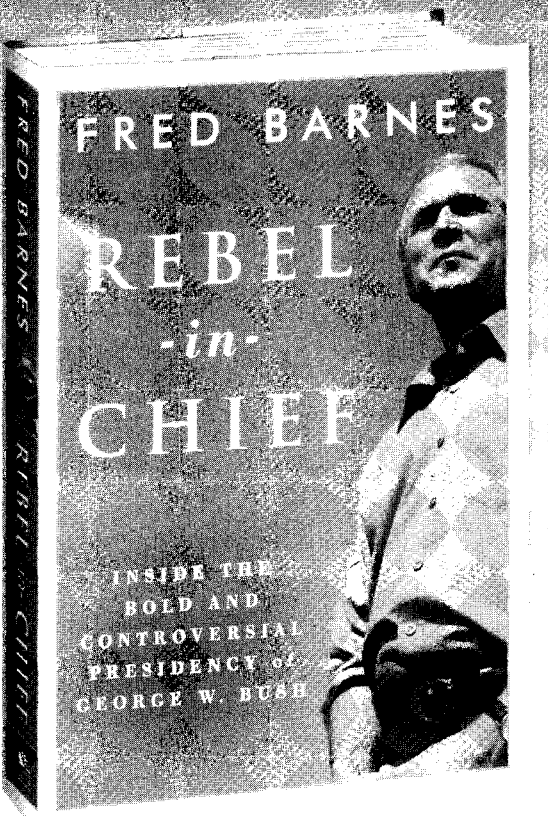

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Misadventures in Cloning

Woo-Suk Hwang's American collaborator.

BY PAMELA R. WINNICK

ON JANUARY 12, the renowned journal *Science* retracted two articles written by South Korean scientist Woo-Suk Hwang, one published in February 2004 and a related piece—this one with an American "senior author"—published in May 2005. Both papers detailed an astonishing breakthrough in cloning research: Not only had a human embryo been cloned, but—far more significantly for regenerative medicine—stem cells had been extracted from the clones. Researchers hoped that such genetically identical, patient-specific stem cells could someday be implanted in sick people to regenerate cells destroyed by Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, spinal-cord injury, and a variety of other degenerative diseases, benefiting millions.

But it turned out that Hwang's breakthrough was all a fraud, among the most egregious in the history of science. Hwang has been repudiated by respectable scientists and is facing criminal charges in his own country. What is notable is that his American collaborator, Dr. Gerald Schatten of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and its related Magee-Women's Research Institute, has managed thus far to come out of this mess unscathed.

And why not? It was Schatten, after all, who raised the alarm about Hwang, ostensibly taking the high road while also distancing himself from the miscreant. In November, Schatten informed *Science* that he had just learned that Hwang unethically paid women to provide him their eggs. Then, in December, six months after the piece in *Science*, Schatten announced that Hwang's work itself was a fabrication. He cited his own "careful re-evaluations of published figures and tables" as well as unidentified "problematic information" he had received.

Snuppy, or just another puppy?

Reuters / Landov

Why he hadn't conducted a "careful evaluation" of the research before the paper was published remains unclear. Nonetheless, Schatten has been portrayed by the media and a nervous University of Pittsburgh as a mere adviser to Hwang, one who, when he learned of the fabrication, promptly exposed it. Schatten himself declines to speak to the press while a university investigation is underway.

But questions remain. Schatten, 56, who has a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, is vice chair for research development and professor of obstetrics, gynecology, and reproductive sciences and cell biology and physiology at the medical school. He began his collaboration with Hwang in late 2003, when, during a tour of the South Korean lab, Hwang told him that his team had created a human clone. Hwang persuaded Schatten to sign on to the 2005 paper. The two also collaborated with the South Korean lab on animal-cloning research, producing a cloned Afghan named "Snuppy," as they reported in the British journal *Nature* in August 2005. Though some in the research community believe that Snuppy might also have been a fraud, that work so far has not been exposed as faulty.

Similarly, some question whether a responsible scientist would have collaborated with Hwang to begin with. Robert Lanza of Advanced Cell Technology, a Worcester, Massachusetts, biotech company that researches human cloning, was suspicious of Hwang's methods from the outset because, he says, the chemicals used would have killed the egg cells. He was not alone.

After Hwang's 2004 article was published, an unnamed "stem cell expert" told United Press International, "I've checked now with four or five [stem cell scientists], and no one believes the results." Researchers demanded a "verification study"—a repeat of the experiment—but Hwang refused. Some Korean scientists were equally uneasy. "Many of us didn't trust him," a biologist at the Korea Advanced Institute told the

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New York Times recently. Many posted questions on their websites, only to find themselves rebuked by Hwang's adoring South Korean public.

Even without the aroma of controversy, it's unusual, scientists say, for a researcher to sign on as senior author of a paper when the research is conducted in another lab—especially one on the other side of the world. The editor of *Science*, Dr. Donald Kennedy, says he never signs a paper unless he has himself conducted the research. Lanza won't even sign a paper based on research in his own lab unless he has personally cross-checked every step. In any event, most agree, once Schatten signed on as senior author, he had an obligation to make sure the research was aboveboard and accurate. What explains his failure to do so?

Some scientists who have met Hwang testify to his mesmerizing charm. Others view Schatten as an opportunist eager to share a Nobel Prize with Hwang. As early as April 2004, Schatten and two Pittsburgh colleagues applied for a U.S. patent on a procedure for cloning primates, including humans (although Schatten's own attempt to clone a monkey ended in failure). At the very least, Schatten showed a marked eagerness to place himself at the cutting edge of animal and human cloning.

Last year, for the first time, Schatten took his high-level seminar on stem cells to Stanford, in the wake of Proposition 71, the measure by which California voters allocated $3 billion for human embryonic stem cell research. Schatten told the *Sacramento Bee* in June, "I wanted to run a course at a place where people would be sitting on the edges of their seats, knowing that they had a constitutional right to do the most exciting medical research out there."

The title of the seminar was "Frontiers in Human Embryonic Stem Cells." As Schatten told the *Bee*, "When we say 'frontiers,' we mean all of the frontiers: scientific and medical frontiers, also the religious frontier, the legal frontier, the financial frontier and the career frontier and the political frontier. You can just go on and on."

Schatten's present predicament is not his first brush with professional embarrassment. While he was a researcher at the University of Wisconsin in 1994, a fertility clinic at the University of California, Irvine, supplied him with human eggs that had been illegally extracted without the women's consent. An investigation by the University of Wisconsin determined that Schatten had been provided fraudulent documents certifying the provenance of the eggs, and he was cleared of any wrongdoing.

Acutely conscious of its public image, the University of Pittsburgh has named a mostly in-house team to examine Schatten's relationship with Hwang, including the Snuppy article. Five of the six members of the committee are Pittsburgh professors. Still, a spokeswoman says its findings will be made public.

A second investigation has been launched by the National Institutes of Health to make sure that none of its $6.4 million grant to Schatten for animal cloning was used in violation of the ban on federal funding of human cloning. Hwang's human-cloning work was funded by South Korea.

Says spokesman Don Ralbovsky, "NIH has initiated a review of activity related to NIH-supported research conducted at the Magee-Women's Research Institute (MWRI) in order to ensure that federal regulations and policies were followed and correctly reported. MWRI is providing additional information to NIH at this time. We cannot have any further comment until the process is completed."

Meanwhile, life goes on for Schatten. He recently sold his $600,000 home in the upscale, Breezewood section of Pittsburgh, but calls to his office suggest that he remains at the hospital. He is scheduled to be the keynote speaker this April at a meeting of the American Society of Andrology, although at least one colleague has urged that he be disinvited. The announced subject of his talk was recently changed—from human embryonic stem cells to assisted reproduction. ♦

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Putting Patients First

Bush's health care agenda.

BY DAVID GRATZER

ASK BROOKE G. about her job, and she enthuses about her salary, health benefits, and her office with a view. There's only one catch: She hates the work. She'd like to quit, but she worries about getting health insurance. "It's very expensive in New York," she explains. Brooke, a self-described liberal Democrat, voted for Kerry in 2004. Ironically enough, she could benefit greatly from President Bush's health care proposals. If the White House gets its way, people like Brooke will have more insurance options at lower premiums and better health information.

Health care will be the centerpiece of the White House's domestic agenda for 2006. In Tuesday's State of the Union, the president will focus on rising health costs, with more detailed policy announcements to follow in the weeks ahead. This much is already clear: The president will strongly promote consumer-driven health care with a series of tax initiatives—relatively modest and, compared with ClintonCare, easy on the wallet—that represent an important shift in the health care paradigm of the last three decades: toward choice and competition, away from big government efforts.

Since 2000, health insurance premiums are up 73 percent. Speaking recently in Kentucky, President Bush observed that health care is increasingly "an unmanageable cost" for business. He stated that, in an ideal health system, "there is a direct connect between provider and customer, [and] there is transparency in the pricing system." His proposals will push in that direction.

The goal is clear. Patients ought to behave more like consumers—asking hard questions of providers, researching their options, and shopping around for the best value. Just as consumer empowerment has transformed banking and telecommunications, health care would be reshaped by such innovation and competition.

But compared with the president's ideal system, today's reality is vastly different. Transparency in pricing is a case in point. Hospitals have price lists, but they often mean little. I should know. Some years ago, my wife injured her back. Uninsured and needing surgery, she admitted herself to a reputable hospital. Six weeks later, we received an inscrutable bill for an extraordinary sum of money. When we called, the hospital administrator explained the bill was "negotiable."

The problem is the lack of financial accountability between those who provide health care and those who receive it. Rather than paying directly, most people get their health insurance from their employers. Someone else foots the bill. Consider that, as of 2003, three quarters of Americans covered by employer plans faced a co-pay of $15 or less to see a physician. The end result is that the market forces that have reshaped the rest of the economy are almost completely absent from health care. Patients have little incentive to look for a better deal. Whereas in a functioning market, information is readily available (think of shopping for a hotel room in New York City), the health care market remains a black box (now think about trying to find a hospital with the best outcomes for hip replacements).

How then to move in the right direction? Fortunately, Congress already has taken one important step. Because of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003, Americans can now get health savings accounts. HSAs allow people to purchase relatively inexpensive, high-deductible insurance and deposit money into a tax-free account. Thus, they combine real insurance (i.e., coverage for high and unpredictable costs) with contributions to a savings account that can be used to pay for smaller health expenses and be rolled over from year to year. Unlike traditional insurance, HSAs empower their holders with health dollars, providing them an incentive to act more like consumers.

HSAs are quietly winning converts. Last March, America's Health Insurance Plans, an industry trade group, announced that more than three million Americans were enrolled in HSAs, a tripling of enrollment in just 10 months. Now large employers, like Wal-Mart, who tend to be cautious about change, are starting to offer the option.

President Bush hopes to push the idea further: allowing people to put more money into their health accounts; encouraging individuals not covered by company plans to opt for HSAs by making the premiums deductible; encouraging providers to make more cost-related health information available so patients can better choose among hospitals and physicians. Together, the above reforms could help popularize HSAs. Under President Bush's plan, Brooke, for example, would have the same ability as her employer to pay premiums in pre-tax dollars. Though that wouldn't completely address the tax inequity, it still means she'd save 30 percent.

But if the president is on the right path, he walks gingerly. In 2005, he stood before Congress and offered a sweeping plan for Social Security; this year, he offers some important tinkering—but tinkering, nonethe-

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less. In part, the White House remembers too well last year's failure. But it's also true that Congress has done little with Bush's health reforms to date. Tax credits for the uninsured, association health plans, Medicaid block grants—in each case, White House enthusiasm has been met by congressional apathy.

President Bush now promotes small goals. But it may be in his interest to be bolder. This, after all, is an election year, and congressional Republicans can anticipate an attack on their health care flank. Why not push the HSA idea further? President Bush could outline a new vision for American health care—where people are able to get health insurance across state lines, thereby avoiding the hyper-regulation of certain states; where Medicaid recipients are given their own HSAs, empowering them with health dollars; where HSAs are flexible in structure, so that the chronically ill aren't stuck in the same model as their coworkers at the workplace.

Ultimately, American health care needs to devolve decision-making back to the individual. President Bush can help make that happen. ♦

The End of the *World*

And the demise of the *New Leader*.

BY ARNOLD BEICHMAN

THERE IS NOTHING SADDER—for me anyway—than watching a newspaper or magazine go under, as has just happened to the *New Leader*, for which I used to write.

I go back far enough to recall the shutdown in 1931 of the *New York World*, the Pulitzer flagship, which Pulitzer's sons sold to the *New York Evening Telegram*. I was working my way through Columbia College as a night copyboy at the *New York Herald Tribune* on West 41st Street. My last assignment of the night was to deliver late syndicated copy (this was the Stone Age, no fax machines) to a *Buffalo Courier-Express* correspondent in the old World Building on Park Row across the street from City Hall.

My boyhood ambition was to be a reporter on the *World*, a daily with a unique distinction. Its city editor, Charles Chapin, was convicted on January 14, 1919, for the murder of his wife. But the paper had other distinctions. The *World* was a paper with star writer-editors like Walter Lippmann, Herbert Bayard Swope, A.J. Liebling, Alexander Woollcott, Irvin S. Cobb, William Bolitho, and the great cartoonist Rollin Kirby.

The *Courier-Express* correspondent was on an upper floor and the *World* was on the second floor. It was on the *World*'s last night, and I dared to stop to get a look at the half-empty city room. I saw a reporter shouting into a phone: "Joe, you got to lend us the money. We'll pay you back." Then he slammed down the receiver and banged his head on the typewriter before him. It was later explained to me that the sober staffers (the city room reeked of booze, bottles of liquor were everywhere) were trying to get money to buy the paper. They didn't know that the sale to the *Telegram* was a done deal.

All this happened some seven decades ago, but it is unforgettable to me. The end of the *New Leader*, announced last week, brought back memories of the once-weekly magazine's Social Democratic founding editor, Sol Levitas, a Menshevik refugee from the Bolshevik revolution. His magazine, founded in 1924, had one aim—fighting communism and down with the Bolsheviks. He surrounded himself with other anti-Stalinist refugees and together they started a publication that became must-reading even in Washington.

One of the reasons the *New Leader* became prominent is that Levitas and his writers were unapologetic about their anti-Stalinism at a time when fellow-traveling, united-front politics was in the ascendant. For the *New Leader* there was nothing good one could say for Bolshevism. Another reason was the quality of its writers and of their scholarly research about Soviet affairs.

One remarkable contributor was a Menshevik émigré named Boris Nicolaevsky (1888-1966). He read all the Soviet publications he could lay his hands on, and he would then come up with startling information the Kremlin was hiding. Part of his technique was to keep track of which Soviet political surnames were mentioned in the media and which no longer were. It was from Nicolaevsky that we learned Stalin had purged Nikolai Voznesensky, 47, a high party official in Leningrad. In 1948, his name had suddenly disappeared over several weeks without explanation from *Pravda* and *Izvestia*. There was only one explanation: Stalin at work. And Nicolaevsky was right as usual, as Nikita Khrushchev revealed in his 1956 anti-Stalin speech.

The magazine itself and its founding editor, who died in 1961, had no real sense of journalistic ethics. But who cared? For example, it often ran on-the-spot articles about events in faraway places that were actually written in New York City. Reports datelined Madrid or Barcelona during the Spanish civil war were actually written in house under a pseudonym by an underpaid staffer with a

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lively imagination, Victor Riesel, later a prominent syndicated columnist. When readers traveling to Spain insistently demanded to meet the writer, the *New Leader* announced he had—alas!—been killed in Barcelona by Fascist bullets.

On another occasion, a young staffer, Daniel Bell, today a retired Harvard professor and famous sociologist, came into the office of Levitas. Bell showed Levitas an editorial attack he had written. Levitas read the proposed article and shook his head doubtfully: "Danny, why do we want to antagonize our enemies?"

Levitas, however, had no problem antagonizing the Soviet Union, the *New Leader*'s raison d'être. Too bad he didn't live to see what would have been his moment of triumph: the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. And too bad we will see no more of the magazine he founded. ♦

I Am Not a Straussian

At least, I don't think I am.

BY ROBERT KAGAN

I JUST WANT TO MAKE CLEAR that I am not a Straussian. Not that there's anything wrong with that. Some of my closest friends are Straussians, and I have long admired the work of Allan Bloom, Harry Jaffa, Harvey Mansfield, and Thomas Pangle—though not, I must say, Leo Strauss himself, since I have never understood a word the political philosopher wrote. I mean not a single word. Nor have I been very good at understanding his disciples, really, and Pangle, from whom I once took two courses, can back me up on this.

I feel the need to set the record straight because I am routinely called a Straussian by students of what is known as neoconservatism, and at the very least this is an insult to true Straussians, who presumably do understand what they're talking about. There isn't room here to list all the places where I have been called a Straussian—a Google search for "Robert Kagan" and "Leo Strauss" turns up 16,500 hits. Suffice to say that the immensely erudite Arthur Schlesinger Jr. has referred to me as a "student" of Strauss and Bloom, as has the columnist William Pfaff, and a half dozen other equally learned folk. A professor somewhere named Anne Norton has written a whole book assuming that I am a Straussian. You may ask why didn't she call me, just to confirm. But that would have been journalism, not scholarship. Then there are the followers of Lyndon LaRouche (see their "Children of Satan" pamphlets), left-wing and right-wing bloggers, as well as Arab, Asian, African, and, of course, European journalists and academics.

In recent years the discussion has achieved a new level. I am now frequently accused of being not just a Straussian but a bad Straussian, because some scholars have pointed out that my foreign policy views do not really accord with Strauss's thinking. So I have been charged with distorting and even betraying Straussianism. I'm prepared to believe this is true. But as I mentioned, I don't understand Strauss, so it's hard for me to evaluate.

Again, I don't really care. But I see that courses are now being taught in some American colleges urging students to delve into the significance of Straussianism in shaping my foreign policy views. And I think it's a shame if students write entire papers based on a simple factual error.

It is true that I have known Straussians almost all my life. And the one thing I was taught about them from the earliest age is that they are wrong. The person who taught me this was my father, an ancient historian who spent a good portion of his time at Cornell University in the 1960s arguing with Allan Bloom. As a youngster of eight or nine I got to witness many of these arguments in the faculty lunch room at the Statler, where my father would take me on summer days. They were fun. For one thing, Bloom was an incredible character, though to my youthful eye he acted, talked, and dressed a bit silly. I remember being absolutely enthralled by his famous stutter. He would start a sentence by saying, "The-ah, the-ah, the-ah, the-ah, the-ah truth that Socrates was, ah, seeking . . . " Something like that. Also, whenever I saw him he would practically squeeze the life out of me with a bear-hug. It was actually painful. And he once accidentally stubbed a cigar out on my hand at a poker game.

But that's not the reason I never became a Straussian. It was because my father explained to me, as well as to Bloom, of course, that Bloom did not understand Plato. This may seem a bit outrageous to many people today, given Bloom's reputation. But I still think my father was right, and at the time I had no doubt that he was right. My father was and is a great arguer, and as a boy I was inclined to believe that he was right about practically everything. So to me, the Kagan-Bloom debates always looked like a complete wipe-out.

As best I can recall, their biggest point of contention was whether

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Plato was just kidding in *The Republic*. Bloom said he was just kidding. I later learned that this idea—that the greatest thinkers in history never mean what they say and are always kidding—is a core principle of Straussianism. My friend, the late Al Bernstein, also taught history at Cornell. He used to tell the story about how one day some students of his, coming directly from one of Bloom's classes, reported that Bloom insisted Plato did not mean what he said in *The Republic*. To which Bernstein replied: "Ah, Professor Bloom wants you to *think* that's what he believes. What he really believes is that Plato *did* mean what he said."

Anyway, my father said Plato was not kidding. The argument would go back and forth for hours, and in my memory it always ended with Bloom saying, "We'll have to look at the text," which was a great way of ending the discussion because there was no ancient Greek text of *The Republic* available in the Statler's lunch room. So, as I saw it, and as my father saw it, that was sort of a surrender.

I learned from my father that the problem with Straussians was that they were ahistorical. They were consumed with the great thinkers and believed the great thinkers were engaged in a dialogue with one another across time. This made Straussians slight the historical circumstances in which great thinkers did their thinking. Indeed, my father, the historian, taught me to mistrust not only Straussians but also political philosophy in general, and I have pretty much done so—though, again, I have to admit it's partly because I find it hard to understand.

The irony was that my father, who never agreed with the Straussians, spent a good deal of time defending them from attack at the university. In the late 1970s, he tried to save Tom Pangle from getting chased out of Yale by the political science department, many of whose leading lights declared Pangle's views intolerable. (They didn't even know at the time that Straussianism would prove to be the main cause of the Iraq war three decades later—although they may have suspected it.) My dad tried to help not because he agreed with everything Pangle thought but on grounds of academic freedom.

That episode may explain why even my poor father sometimes gets called a Straussian. But I sometimes fear he is being tarred by his association with me, his Straussian son. Being a gentleman of the old school, he has never felt it necessary or appropriate to correct the record. But I thought I'd better, because this is a different world, one where factual errors whip around the Internet, and no one is ever kidding.

This article is first in a series. Next: "I am not a Trotskyist." ♦

Michael Ramirez

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David P. Gilkey / Detroit Free Press / Corbis: Cordon and search operations near Baghdad, August 15, 2004

THE COUNTERREVOLUTION IN MILITARY AFFAIRS

fashionable thinking about defense technology ignores the great threats of our time

By Ralph Peters

Revolutions notoriously imprison their most committed supporters. Intellectually, influential elements within our military are locked inside the cells of the Revolution in Military Affairs—the doctrinal cult of the past decade that preaches that technological leaps will transcend millennia-old realities of warfare. Our current conflicts have freed the Pentagon from at least some of the nonsensical theories of techno-war, but too many of our military and civilian leaders remain captivated by the notion that machines can replace human beings on the battlefield. Chained to their 20th-century successes, they cannot face the new reality: Wars of flesh, faith, and cities. Meanwhile, our enemies, immediate and potential, appear to grasp the contours of future war far better than we do.

From Iraq's Sunni Triangle to China's military high command, the *counter*revolution in military affairs is well underway. We are seduced by what we can do; our enemies focus on what they must do. We have fallen so deeply in love with the means we have devised for waging conceptual wars that we are blind to their marginal relevance in actual wars. Terrorists, for one lethal example, do not fear "network-centric warfare" because they have already mastered it for a tiny fraction of one cent on the dollar, achieving greater relative effects with the Internet, cell phones, and cheap airline tickets than all of our military technologies have delivered. Our prime weapon in our struggles with terrorists, insurgents, and warriors of every patchwork sort remains the soldier or Marine; yet, confronted with reality's bloody evidence, we simply pretend that other, future, hypothetical wars will justify the systems we adore—purchased at the expense of the assets we need.

Stubbornly, we continue to fantasize that a wondrous enemy will appear who will fight us on our own terms, as a masked knight might have materialized at a stately tournament in a novel by Sir Walter Scott. Yet, not even China—the threat beloved of major defense contractors and their advocates—would play by our rules if folly ignited war. Against terrorists, we have found technology alone incompetent to master men of soaring will—our own flesh and blood provide the only effective counter. At the other extreme, a war with China, which our war gamers blithely assume would be brief, would reveal the *quantitative incompetence* of our forces. An assault on a continent-spanning power would swiftly drain our stocks of precision weapons, ready pilots, and aircraft. Quality, no matter how great, is not a reliable substitute for a robust force in being *and* deep reserves that can be mobilized rapidly.

There is, in short, not a single enemy in existence or

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on the horizon willing to play the victim to the military we continue to build. Faced with men of iron belief wielding bombs built in sheds and basements, our revolution in military affairs appears more an indulgence than an investment. In the end, our enemies will not outfight us. We'll muster the will to do what must be done—after paying a needlessly high price in the lives of our troops and damage to our domestic infrastructure. We will not be beaten, but we may be shamed and embarrassed on a needlessly long road to victory.

WEAPON OF GENIUS

Not a single item in our trillion-dollar arsenal can compare with the genius of the suicide bomber—the breakthrough weapon of our time. Our intelligence systems cannot locate him, our arsenal cannot deter him, and, all too often, our soldiers cannot stop him before it is too late. A man of invincible conviction—call it delusion, if you will—armed with explosives stolen or purchased for a handful of soiled bills can have a strategic impact that staggers governments. Abetted by the global media, the suicide bomber is the wonder weapon of the age.

The suicide bomber's willingness to discard civilization's cherished rules for warfare gives him enormous strength. In the Cain-and-Abel conflicts of the 21st century, ruthlessness trumps technology. We refuse to comprehend the suicide bomber's soul—even though today's wars are contests of souls, and belief is our enemy's ultimate order of battle. We write off the suicide bomber as a criminal, a wanton butcher, a terrorist. Yet, within his spiritual universe, he's more heroic than the American soldier who throws himself atop a grenade to spare his comrades: He isn't merely protecting other men, but defending his god. The suicide bomber can justify any level of carnage because he's doing his god's will. We agonize over a prisoner's slapped face, while our enemies are lauded as heroes for killing innocent masses (even of fellow believers). We continue to narrow our view of warfare's acceptable parameters even as our enemies amplify the concept of total war.

Islamist terrorists, to cite the immediate example, would do *anything* to win. Our enemies act on ecstatic revelations from their god. We act on the advice of lawyers. It is astonishing that we have managed to hold the line as well as we have.

The ultimate precision weapon, the suicide bomber simultaneously redefines the scope of "legitimate" targets. Delighted to kill our troops, this implacable enemy who regards death as a promotion is equally ready to slaughter men, women, and children of unknown identity who have done him no harm. His force of will towers over our own. He cannot win wars on the traditional battlefields we cherish, but his commitment and actions transcend such tidy limits. In the moment of his deed, the suicide bomber is truly larger than life. The world's a stage, and every suicide bomber is, at least briefly, a star.

We will develop the means to defeat the majority of, if not all, improvised explosive devices. But the suicide bomber—the living, thinking assassin determined to die—may prove impossible to stop. Even if we discover a means to identify him at a distance from our troops, he has only to turn to easier targets. Virtually anything the suicide bomber attacks brings value to his cause—destruction of any variety is a victory. The paradox is that his act of self-destruction is also an undeniable assertion that "I am," as he becomes the voice from below that the mighty cannot ignore. We are trained to think in terms of cause and effect—but the suicide bomber merges the two. The gesture *and* the result are inseparable from and integral to his message. Self-destruction and murder join to become the ultimate act of self-assertion.

And his deed is heralded, while even our most virtuous acts are condemned around the world. Even in the days before mass media, assassins terrorized civilizations. Today, their deeds are amplified by a toxic, breathtakingly irresponsible communications culture that spans the globe. Photogenic violence is no longer a local affair—if a terrorist gives the media picturesque devastation, he reaches the entire planet. We cannot measure the psychological magnification, although we grasp it vaguely. And the media's liturgical repetition of the suicide bomber's act creates an atmosphere of sacrament. On a primal level, the suicide bomber impresses even his enemies with his conviction. We hasten to dismiss his deed as a perversion, yet it resounds as a vivid act of faith. Within his own cultural context, people may hate what the suicide bomber does, yet revere his sacrifice (and, too often, they do *not* hate what he does).

We may refuse to accept it, but suicide bombing operates powerfully on practical, emotional, and spiritual levels—and it generates dirt-cheap propaganda. To the Muslim world, the suicide bomber's act is a proof of faith that ensnares the mind with a suspicion of his righteousness. He is a nearly irresistible champion of the powerless, the Middle East's longed-for superhero, the next best thing to the Mahdi or the Twelfth Imam.

We praise Nathan Hale's willingness to die for his cause. Now imagine thousands of men *anxious* to die for theirs. The suicide bomber may be savage, brutal, callous,

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heartless, naive, psychotic, and, to us, despicable, but within his milieu he is also heroic.

The hallmark of our age is the failure of belief systems and a subsequent flight back to primitive fundamentalism —and the phenomenon isn't limited to the Middle East. Faith revived is running roughshod over science and civilization. Secular societies appear increasingly fragmented, if not fragile. The angry gods are back. And they will not be defeated with cruise missiles or computer codes.

A paradox of our time is that the overwhelmingly secular global media—a collection of natural-born religion-haters—have become the crucial accomplices of the suicide bomber fueled by rabid faith. Mass murderers are lionized as freedom fighters, while our own troops are attacked by the press they protect for the least waywardness or error. One begins to wonder if the bomber's suicidal impulse isn't matched by a deep death wish affecting the West's cultural froth. (What if Darwin was right conceptually, but failed to grasp that homo sapiens' most powerful evolutionary strategy is faith?) Both the suicide bomber and the "world intellectual" with his reflexive hatred of America exist in emotional realms that our rational models of analysis cannot explain. The modern age's methods for interpreting humanity are played out.

We live in a new age of superstition and bloodthirsty gods, of collective madness. Its icons are the suicide bomber, the veil, and the video camera.

WARS OF FAITH

One of the most consistently disheartening experiences an adult can have today is to listen to the endless attempts by our intellectuals and intelligence professionals to explain religious terrorism in clinical terms, assigning rational motives to men who have moved irrevocably beyond reason. We suffer under layers of intellectual asymmetries that hinder us from an intuitive recognition of our enemies. Our rear-guard rationalists range from those convinced that every security problem has a technological solution, if only it can be found, to those who insist that members of al Qaeda and its affiliates are motivated by finite, comprehensible, and logical ambitions that, if satisfied, would make our problems disappear.

Living in unprecedented safety within our borders and lacking firsthand knowledge of the decay beyond, honorable men and women have convinced themselves that Osama bin Laden's professed goals of driving the United States from the Middle East and removing corrupt regional governments are what global terror is all about. They gloss over his ambition of reestablishing the caliphate and his calls for the destruction of Israel as rhetorical effects—when they address them at all. Yet, Islamist fanatics are more deeply committed to their maximalist goals than to their lesser ones—and their unspoken ambitions soar beyond logic's realm. Religious terrorists are committed to an apocalypse they sense within striking distance. Their longing for union with god is inseparable from their impulse toward annihilation. They seek their god in carnage, and will go on slaughtering until he appears to pat them on the back.

A dangerous asymmetry exists in the type of minds working the problem of Islamist terrorism in our government and society. On average, the "experts" to whom we are conditioned to listen have a secular mentality (even if they go to church or synagogue from habit). And it is a very rare secular mind that can comprehend religious passion—it's like asking a blind man to describe the colors of fire. One suspects that our own fiercest believers are best equipped to penetrate the mentality—the souls—of our Islamist enemies, although those believers may not be as articulate as the secular intellectuals who anxiously dismiss all possibilities that lie outside their theoretical constructs.

Those who feel no vital faith cannot comprehend faith's power. A man or woman who has never been intoxicated by belief will default to mirror-imaging when asked to describe terror's roots. He who has never experienced a soul-shaking glimpse of the divine inevitably explains religion-driven suicide bombers in terms of a lack of economic opportunity or social humiliation. But the enemies we face are burning with belief, on fire with their vision of an immanent, angry god. Our intelligentsia is less equipped to understand such men than our satellites are to find them.

All of our technologies and comforting theories are confounded by the strength of the soul ablaze with faith. Our struggle with Islamist terror (other religious terrors may haunt our descendants) has almost nothing to do with our actions in the Middle East. It's about a failing civilization's embrace of a furious god.

We are not (yet) at war with Islam, but the extreme believers within Islam are convinced that they are soldiers in a religious war against us. Despite their rhetoric, *they* are the crusaders. Even our conceptions of the struggle are asymmetrical. Despite the horrors we have witnessed, we have yet to take religious terrorists seriously on their own self-evident terms. We invaded a succession of their tormented countries, but haven't come close to penetrating their souls. The hermetic universe of the Islamist terrorist is immune to our reality (if not to our bullets), but our

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intellectuals appear equally incapable of accepting the religious extremist's reality.

We have no tools of persuasion effective against a millenarian belief. What logic can we wield against the soul fortified by faith and barricaded beyond argument? Even if we understood every nuance of our enemy's culture, the suicide bomber's intense faith and the terror chieftain's visions have burned through native cultural restraints. We are told, rather smugly, that the Koran forbids suicide. But our enemies are not concerned with how we read their faith. Religions are living things, and ultra-extremists are improvising a new and savage cult within Islam—even as they proclaim their return to a purified faith.

Security-wise, we have placed our faith in things, in bright (and expensive) material objects. But the counter-revolution in military affairs is based on the brilliant intuition that our military can be sidestepped often enough to challenge its potency. Certainly, we inflict casualties on our enemies—and gain real advantages from doing so—but we not only face an enemy who, as observed above, views death as a promotion, but also one who believes he has won even when he loses. If the suicide bomber completes his mission, he has won. But even if he is killed or dies short of his target, he has conquered a place in paradise. Which well-intentioned information operation of ours can compete with the conviction that a martyr's death leads to eternal joy?

Again, our intelligentsia falls woefully short. The most secularized element of our society—educated to avoid faith (or, at the very least, to shun enthusiastic, vigorous, proud, and public faith)—our professional thinkers have lost any sense of a literal paradise beyond the grave. But our enemies enjoy a faith as vivid as did our ancestors, for whom devils lurked in the undergrowth and paradise was an idealized representation of that which mortals knew. We are taught that we should never underestimate our enemies—yet, we underestimate the power of his faith, his most potent weapon.

Nor should we assume that Islamist extremists will remain the only god-haunted terrorists attacking established orders. This century may prove to be one of multi-sided struggles over the interpretation of god's will, between believers and unbelievers, between the varieties of the faithful, between monotheists and polytheists, between master faiths and secessionist movements, between the hollow worshippers of science and those swollen with the ecstasy of belief.

Naturally, we view the cardinal struggle as between the West and extremists within the Islamic world; yet, the bloodiest religious warfare of the coming decades may be between Sunni and Shia Muslims, or between African Muslims and the new, sub-Saharan Church Militant. Hindu extremists gnaw inward from the epidermis of Indian society, while even Buddhist monks have engaged in organized violence in favor of their ostensibly peaceable faith. In a bewildering world where every traditional society is under assault from the forces of global change, only religion seems to provide a reliable refuge. And each god seems increasingly a jealous god.

Faith is the great strategic factor that unbelieving faculties and bureaucracies ignore. It may be the crucial issue of this century. And we cannot even speak about it honestly. Give me a warrior drunk with faith, and I will show you a weapon beyond the dreams of any laboratory. Our guided bombs may kill individual terrorists, but the terrorist knows that our weapons can't kill his god.

THE OTHER EXTREME

Even in preparing for "big wars," we refuse to take the enemy into account. Increasingly, our military is designed for breathtaking sprints, yet a war with China—were one forced upon us by events—would be a miserable, long march. For all the rhetoric expended and the innumerable wargames played, the best metaphor for a serious struggle with Beijing—perhaps of Homeric length—comes from that inexhaustible little book, Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness*, with its pathetic image of a Western gunboat lobbing shells uselessly into a continent.

Given the comprehensive commitment and devastation required to defeat strategically and structurally weaker enemies such as Japan and Germany, how dare we pretend that we could drive China to sue for peace by fighting a well-mannered war with a small military whose shallow stocks of ammunition would be drained swiftly and could not be replaced in meaningful quantities? Would we try Shock and Awe, Part II, over Beijing, hoping to convince China's leaders to surrender at the sight of our special effects? Or would our quantitative incompetence soon force us onto the defensive?

We must be realistic about the military requirements of a war with China, but we also need to grasp that, for such an enemy, the military sphere would be only one field of warfare—and not the decisive one. What would it take to create an atmosphere of defeat in a sprawling nation of over one billion people? A ruthless economic blockade, on the seas, in the air, and on land, would be an essential component of any serious war plan, but the Chinese capability for sheer endurance might surprise us. Could we win against China without inflicting extensive devastation on Chinese cities? Would even that be

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Reuters

Anti-American protest in South Lebanon, May 27, 2005

enough? Without mirror-imaging again, can we identify any incentive China's leaders would have to surrender?

The Chinese version of the counterrevolution in military affairs puts less stress on a head-to-head military confrontation (although that matters, of course) and more on defeating the nation behind our military. Despite the importance Beijing attaches to a strong military, China won't fall into the trap that snared the Soviets—the attempt to compete with our military expenditures. Why fight battles you'll lose, when you can wage war directly against the American population by attacking its digital and physical infrastructure, its confidence and morale? In a war of mutual suffering, which population would be better equipped, practically and psychologically, to endure massive power outages, food-chain disruptions, the obliteration of databases, and even epidemic disease?

Plenty of Americans are tougher than we're credited with being, but what about the now-decisive intelligentsia? What about those conditioned to levels of comfort unimaginable to the generation that fought World War II (or even Vietnam)? Would 21st-century suburban Americans accept rationing without protests? Whenever I encounter Chinese abroad I am astonished by their chauvinism. Their confidence is reminiscent of Americans' a half century ago. Should we pretend that Chinese opinion-makers, such as they are, would feel inclined to attack their government as our journalists attack Washington? A war with China would be a massive contest of wills, and China might need to break the will of only a tiny fraction of our population. It only takes a few hundred men and women in Washington to decide that a war is lost.

As for our military technologies, how, exactly, would an F/A-22 destroy the Chinese will to endure and prevail? How would it counteract a hostile media? If we should worry about any strategic differences with China, they are the greater simplicity and robustness of China's less developed (hence, less fragile) infrastructure, and a greater will to win in Beijing. No matter how well our military might perform, sufficient pain inflicted on the American people could lead a weak national leadership to a capitulation thinly disguised as a compromise. Addicted to trade with China, many in America's business community would push for a rapid end to any conflict, no matter the cost to our nation as a whole. (When Chinese fighters forced down a U.S. reconnaissance aircraft on Hainan Island several years ago, American-business lobbyists rushed to Capitol Hill to plead for patience with China—they had no interest in our aircrew or our national good.)

The Chinese know they cannot defeat our military. So they intend to circumvent it, as surely as Islamist terrorists seek to do, if in more complex ways. For example, China's navy cannot guarantee its merchant vessels access to sea lanes in the Indian Ocean—routes that carry the oil on which modern China runs. So Beijing is working to build a web of formal and informal client relationships in the region that would deny the U.S. Navy port facilities, challenge the United States in global and regional forums, and secure alternate routes and sources of supply. China's next great strategic initiative is going to be an attempt to woo India, the region's key power, away from a closer relationship with the United States. Beijing may fail, but its strategists are thinking in terms of the out-years, while our horizon barely reaches from one Quadrennial Defense Review to the next.

Even in Latin America, China labors to develop capabilities to frustrate American purposes, weaken hemispheric ties, and divert our strategic resources during a Sino-American crisis. We dream of knock-out blows, while Beijing prepares the death of a thousand cuts. The Chinese are the ultimate heirs of B.H. Liddell Hart and his indirect approach: They would have difficulty conquering Taiwan militarily, but believe they could push us into an asymmetrical defeat through economic, diplomatic, and media campaigns in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and Latin America—while crippling the lifestyle of America's citizens.

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It's become another cliché to observe how much of our manufacturing capability has moved to China while we tolerate, at our own business community's behest, Beijing's cynical undervaluation of its currency. If you don't think this matters, try to go a single week without buying or using a product made in China. A conflict with Beijing might be lost on the empty shelves of Wal-Mart. Indeed, Beijing's most effective international allies are American corporations. In the Second World War we famously converted our consumer industries into producers of wartime materiel. Will a future president find himself trapped by our defense industry's inability to produce consumer goods in wartime?

A war with China would be a total war, waged in spheres where our military is legally forbidden to engage, from data banks to shopping malls. How many readers of this magazine have participated in a wargame that addressed crippling consumer shortages as a conflict with China dragged on for years? Instead, we obsess about the fate of a pair of aircraft carriers. For that matter, how about a scenario that *realistically* portrayed the global media as siding overwhelmingly with China? The metastasizing power of the media is a true strategic revolution of our time—one to which our narrow revolution in military affairs has no reply.

Oh, by the way: Could we win a war with China without killing hundreds of millions of Chinese?

IF NOT PARADISE, UTOPIA

Many of us have struggled to grasp the unreasonable, even fanatical anti-Americanism in the global media—including the hostility in many news outlets and entertainment forums here at home. How can educated men and women, whether they speak Arabic, Spanish, French, or English, condemn America's every move, while glossing over the abuses of dictators and the savagery of terrorists? Why is America blamed even when American involvement is minimal or even nonexistent? How has the most beneficial great power in history been transformed by the international media into a villain of relentless malevolence?

There's a straightforward answer: In their secular way, the world's media elites are as unable to accept the reality confronting them as are Islamist fundamentalists. They hate the world in which they are forced to live, and America has shaped that world.

It isn't that the American-wrought world is so very bad for the global intelligentsia: The freedom they exploit to condemn the United States has been won, preserved, and expanded by American sacrifices and America's example. The problem is that they wanted a *different* world, the utopia promised by socialist and Marxist theorists, an impossible heaven on earth that captured their imagination as surely as visions of paradise enrapture suicide bombers.

The global media may skew secular, but that doesn't protect them against alternative forms of faith. Europeans, for example, have discarded a belief in God as beneath their sophistication—yet they still need a Satan to explain their own failures, just as their ancestors required devils to explain why the milk soured or the herd sickened. Today, America has replaced the horned, cloven-footed Lucifer of Europe's past; behind their smug assumption of superiority, contemporary Europeans are as superstitious and irrational as any of their ancestors: They simply believe in other demons.

One of the most perverse aspects of anti-Americanism in the global media and among the international intelligentsia is that it's presented as a progressive, liberal movement, when it's bitterly reactionary, a spiteful, elitist revolt against the empowerment of the common man and woman (the core ethos of the United States). Despite their outward differences, intellectuals are the logical allies of Islamist extremists—who are equally opposed to social progress and mass freedom. Of course, the terrorists have the comfort of religious faith, while the global intelligentsia, faced with the death of Marxism and the triumph of capitalism, has only its rage.

Human beings are hard-wired for faith. Deprived of a god, they seek an alternative creed. For a time, nationalism, socialism, Marxism, and a number of other -isms *appeared* to have a chance of working—as long as secular intellectuals rejected the evidence of Stalin's crimes or Mao's savagery (much as they overlook the brutalities of Islamist terrorists today). The intellectuals who staff the global media experienced the American-made destruction of their secular belief systems, slowly during the Cold War, then jarringly from 1989 to 1991. The experience has been as disorienting and infuriating to them as if we had proved to Muslim fanatics that their god does not exist.

America's triumph shames the Middle East and Europe alike, and has long dented the pride of Latin America. But the brotherhood of Islamist terrorists and the tribe of global intellectuals who dominate the media are the two groups who feel the most fury toward America. The terrorists dream of a paradise beyond the grave; intellectuals fantasized about utopias on earth. Neither can stomach the practical success of the American way of life, with its insistence on individual performance and its resistance to unearned privilege. For the Islamists, America's power threatens the

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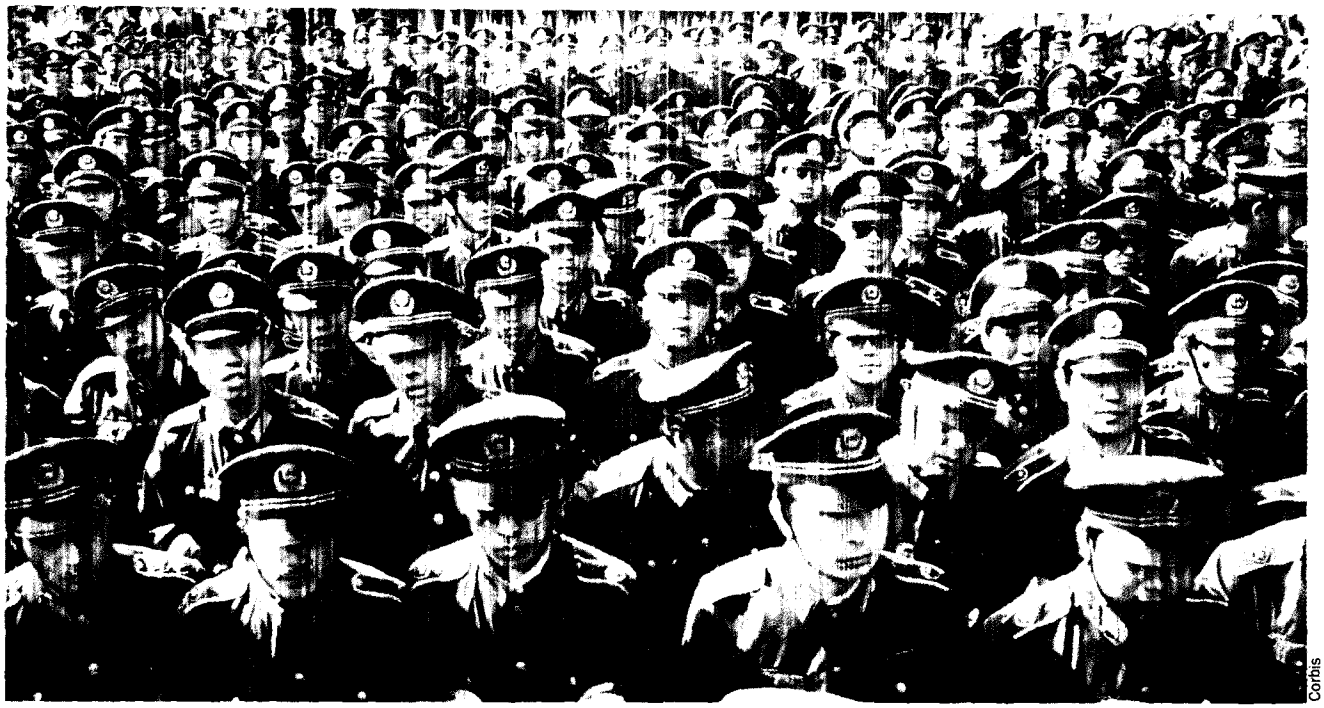

Corbis

Chinese soldiers in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, during the pro-democracy rallies of 1989

promises of their faith. For world-intellectuals, America is the murderer of their most precious fantasies.

Is it any wonder that these two superficially different groups have drifted into collusion?

WHY IT MATTERS

The suicide bomber may be the weapon of genius of our time, but the crucial new strategic factor is the rise of a global information culture that pretends to reflect reality, but in fact creates it. Iraq is only the most flagrant example of the disconnect between empirical reality and the redesigned, politically inflected alternative reality delivered by the media. This phenomenon matters far more than the profiteers of the revolution in military affairs can accept—the global information sphere is now a decisive battleground. Image and idea are as powerful as the finest military technologies.

We have reached the point (as evidenced by the first battle of Falluja) where the global media can overturn the verdict of the battlefield. We will not be defeated by suicide bombers in Iraq, but a chance remains that the international media may defeat us. Engaged with enemies to our front, we try to ignore the enemies at our back—enemies at whom we cannot return fire. Indeed, if anything must be profoundly reevaluated, it's our handling of the media in wartime. We have no obligation to open our accounts to proven enemies, yet we allow ourselves to be paralyzed by platitudes.

This doesn't mean that all of the media are evil or dishonest. It means we need to have the common sense and courage to discriminate between media outlets that attempt to report fairly (and don't compromise wartime secrets) and those whose track records demonstrate their hostility to our national purposes or their outright support for terrorists.

We got it right in World War II, but today we cannot count on patriotism among journalists, let alone their acceptance of censorship boards. Our own reporters pretend to be "citizens of the world" with "higher loyalties," and many view patriotism as decidedly down-market. Obsessed with defending their privileges, they refuse to accept that they also have responsibilities as citizens. But after journalistic irresponsibility kills a sufficient number of Americans, reality will force us to question the media's claim that "the public has a right to know" every secret our government holds in wartime.

The media may constitute the decisive element in the global counterrevolution in military affairs, and the video camera—that insatiable accomplice of the terrorist—the cheap negation of our military technology. (And beware the growing capability of digital technology to create American "atrocities" from scratch.) We are proud of our ability to put steel precisely on target anywhere in the world, but guided bombs don't work against faith or an unchallenged flood of lies. We have fallen in love with wind-up dolls and forgotten the preeminence of the soul.

We need to break the mental chains that bind us to a technology-*über-alles* dream of warfare—a fantasy as absurd and dated as the Marxist dreams of Europe's intellectuals. Certainly, military technologies have their place and can provide our troops with useful tools. But technologies are not paramount. In warfare, flesh and blood are still the supreme currency. And strength of will remains the ultimate weapon. Welcome to the counterrevolution. ♦

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Israel after Sharon . . .

And Palestine after Fatah

By Peter Berkowitz

Tel Aviv

It has been, as usual, another eventful week in Israel. On January 24, Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert—poised to lead his party Kadima (Forward), founded only months ago by the stricken Ariel Sharon, to a decisive victory in the upcoming March 28 national elections—gave his first major public address. Two days later, in their first elections in ten years, Palestinians repudiated their corrupt and despotic Fatah-led government and gave the militant Islamic group Hamas—branded a terrorist organization by Israel, the United States, and Europe, and openly dedicated to Israel's destruction—a decisive majority of 76 seats in their 132-seat parliament.

Hamas's landslide victory—an outcome largely unanticipated not only by Israel but also apparently by Hamas—presents Olmert with the first crisis of his government, and of his campaign. After a special meeting with his national security advisers, he announced late Thursday that he would not talk with a Hamas government. Many difficult questions loom: Will Hamas unleash a new round of terror? Will the international community now cut off its massive transfer of funds to the Palestinian Authority? Will Fatah join the government or remain in opposition? Will the responsibility for ruling and delivering services work to domesticate Hamas? At what pace will Israel proceed with unilateral disengagement? In formulating policies to deal with these difficult questions, Olmert is fortunate that his overall outlook is supported by a new public consensus, a consensus that is closely connected to successful Israeli leadership and failed Palestinian leadership.

An old friend's opinion, delivered four days before the Palestinian elections, is telling: "The Palestinians only understand the language of strength. I don't think we will have peace with them until the army reenters Gaza and the West Bank with tanks and planes and crushes the terrorists." This caught me somewhat by surprise. It's not that there haven't been many voices in Israel over the years expressing grim judgments of this sort. Or that the grim judgment lacks grounds. But this voice was coming from the left, from a former kibbutznik, a medical doctor and a man of peace.

We were visiting the kibbutz where he grew up, on the edge of the Negev, next to the Gaza Strip (hundreds of Hamas's Kassam missiles have fallen here), chatting in the chilly Shabbat evening air, at a birthday party for the 93-year-old matriarch of the family. She was surrounded by her five children, some 15 to 20 grandchildren, and another 15 or so great grandchildren. One of the grandchildren, and himself a new father, my friend was confident that the new Kadima party would survive the prime minister's incapacitation. Indeed, in the weeks since Sharon's stroke, Kadima has slightly increased its commanding lead in the polls, which now indicate that in two months' time it is likely to win more than twice as many seats as either Labor or Likud.

This makes sense, my friend tells me, because Kadima's ascendance reflects profound changes in the Israeli public. On national security, a substantial group of voters on the right, following Sharon, has abandoned the idea of an Israeli future that involves ruling over Palestinians. And a substantial group of voters on the left, if they have not abandoned the idea of finding a negotiating partner among the Palestinians, has at least acquired an intense skepticism about the prospects. At the same time, many voters on the left have rejected Labor's statist principles and have embraced the need for free market reforms. While they would soften the severe fiscal discipline initiated by the Sharon government, they are determined to continue with privatization.

In short, Kadima has arisen out of the union of pragmat-

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ic, center-leaning conservatives who have broken off from the most doctrinaire members of Likud, and pragmatic, center-leaning liberals who have broken off from the most doctrinaire members of Labor. This pivotal development should not be confused with the overhyped Third Way of Tony Blair or Bill Clinton. There the emphasis was on top-down theoretical innovations and the formulation of policies designed to cobble together transitory majorities. What Sharon wrought, however, was something solid: the formulation of principles on national security and economic policy that both reflected his own considered judgment on Israel's most urgent needs and, after almost three decades in which his country was in the grips of ideology-driven politics, gave expression as well as shape to a vital Israeli center. But will this emergent center hold?

The just concluded Sixth Annual Herzliya Conference on National Security illustrated the center's growing power. Israeli academics, business people, journalists, politicians, and national security figures, along with distinguished visitors from abroad, gathered this week several miles north of Tel Aviv for three 14-hour-days of panels and speeches on topics ranging from the Iranian nuclear threat to the rule of law and the inclusion of Arab citizens of Israel in the country's social and political life. The conference's nonstop debate itself is testimony to the vibrancy of democracy in Israel. But it was the featured dinner speeches of Likud candidate for prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Labor candidate Amir Peretz, and Kadima candidate and Acting Prime Minister Olmert that were most revealing.

Neither Netanyahu on Sunday night nor Peretz on Monday night broke new ground or defied expectations, though both showed an appreciation of the need to give the center its due. The former Likud prime minister—slick, smart, and well-spoken—indicated that he is prepared to remove illegal settlements in the West Bank and to make territorial concessions. Former union leader Peretz seemed small, nervous, and not yet ready for prime time leadership. While he expressed optimism about finding a Palestinian negotiating partner, he also declared his readiness, if all else fails, to disengage unilaterally.

Olmert's Tuesday night speech was highly anticipated. A career politician in a country where it is thought particularly unseemly to make a career out of politics, the 60-year-old Olmert was first elected to the Knesset in 1973 and served as mayor of Jerusalem for 10 years (1993-2003). Olmert, like Sharon, was for most of his public life an outspoken proponent of West Bank settlements. But Olmert also became closely identified with the national security policies Sharon adopted as prime minister. Indeed, Olmert was the first conservative and first member of Sharon's cabinet to come out with the idea of disengagement. Subsequently, Olmert collaborated with Sharon on the historic December 2003 Herzliya address in which Sharon announced the disengagement plan. But could the sharp-tongued, quick-tempered career politician fill the shoes of the daring former general who, as prime minister, as on the battlefield throughout his two-and-a-half-decades-long military career, boldly and repeatedly seized the initiative?

In fact, Olmert delivered his speech with conviction and prime-ministerial gravity. And he said what he needed to say. He paid tribute to Sharon and affirmed his intention to continue on "the path of Sharon." He declared that Israel must maintain a Jewish majority by relinquishing control over large parts of the West Bank and establishing clear boundaries, while keeping Jerusalem united under Israeli sovereignty, holding onto the largest Jewish settlement blocs, and establishing security zones. He committed himself to "full implementation" of the U.S.-sponsored Road Map, which calls for the Palestinians to abandon terror in exchange for which Israel will enter into negotiations for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. And while touting the achievements of economic reform—a 5.2 percent growth rate in 2005 (higher than the United States or Europe), reduced unemployment, record levels of foreign investment—Olmert stressed the urgency of lifting up the poor. He would do this not in the old way, through aggressive redistribution, but by expanding opportunity, starting with a restructuring of the educational system.

Moreover, Olmert's Herzliya address contained three remarkable passages that went well beyond what he needed to say. The first affirmed the Jewish right to the historic land of Israel, while emphasizing the moral and political necessity of imposing painful restrictions on the exercise of that right:

> The existence of a Jewish majority in the State of Israel cannot be maintained with the continued control over the Palestinian population in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. We firmly stand by the historic right of the people of Israel to the entire Land of Israel. Every hill in Samaria and every valley in Judea is part of our historic homeland. We do not forget this, not even for one moment. However, the choice between the desire to allow every Jew to live anywhere in the Land of Israel [and] the existence of the State of Israel as a Jewish country—obligates relinquishing parts of the Land of Israel. This is not a relinquishing of the Zionist idea, rather the essential realization of the Zionist goal—ensuring the existence of a Jewish and democratic state in the Land of Israel.

The second represented the most forceful statement to date by an Israeli head of government that illegal settlements must cease and those in existence must be removed:

> The Government of Israel will not be deterred by the threats of a minority of lawbreakers. The unauthorized outposts will be dismantled, and I have already given the

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> appropriate instructions in this regard to our security forces and those entrusted with upholding the law. We will forcefully defend the values of the rule of law, even when attacked from within.

The third clearly connected Israel's national security to the achievement of liberty and democracy among Palestinians:

> We are interested in neighborly relations which are good, productive and progressive. We support the establishment of a modern, democratic Palestinian state which respects civil rights, and is economically prosperous. Their welfare is our welfare, their well-being is our well-being, their stability is our stability.

Together, these statements—even the last, which is in no way inconsistent with acting forcefully to defend Israel's welfare and security from a terrorist state on its border—show an acting prime minister capable of articulating a clear-eyed pragmatic politics for a state that is both Jewish and a liberal democracy.

Will it be enough? Particularly with a neighbor government run by Muslim extremists pledged to Israel's destruction? President Bush's statement at his Thursday morning Washington news conference—if your party has an armed wing and your platform calls for the destruction of Israel, you can't be a partner in peace—was welcome. Meanwhile, Netanyahu was quick to blame disengagement for creating what he called "Hamastan . . . a representative of Iran and in the image of the Taliban." And critics will treat Hamas's victory as further confirmation of the collapse of Bush's policy of promoting democracy in the Middle East.

In fact, Hamas's victory may strengthen Olmert's hand, and it can paradoxically but plausibly be seen as a vindication of the Bush liberty doctrine. Those Kadima voters who, like my friend, migrated to the party from the left will find in the Palestinian election results irrefutable confirmation of what drove them away from their old party in the first place: the conviction that in the short term Israel is unlikely to find a viable negotiating partner representing the Palestinian people and therefore must act unilaterally to establish defensible borders and separate from the Palestinian people. The danger that Kadima faces is that those who came to its ranks from the Likud may be tempted to return. But, in addition to Olmert, Kadima is led by Foreign and Justice Minister Tzipi Livni and Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz, both ex-Likudniks and familiar faces. Furthermore, there is no good reason to suppose that Likud voters who broke with their party to endorse a two-state solution, based if necessary on unilateral disengagement, will think, as the Likud today does, that the solution to the problem of Hamas involves exercising administrative control over the Palestinian people.

As for the Bush liberty doctrine, central to its application to the Middle East was the administration's crucial post-9/11 conclusion that, as the president put it, 50 years of coddling dictators in the region had produced neither stability nor security. However, the Bush administration declined to apply, or failed to effectively apply, this principle to Yasser Arafat and his successor Mahmoud Abbas. Since 1995, Washington, the E.U., and the international community have given many billions of dollars to the Palestinian Authority. But what do the Palestinian people have to show for it? Alas, not homes, schools, hospitals, factories, or roads, the material infrastructure of democracy and peace. A huge proportion of the foreign aid has been stolen or frittered away by the Palestinian leadership. And experts in Israel are convinced that a huge proportion of those who voted Fatah out and Hamas in did so not because they favored war to the death with Israel but because they were sick and tired of being lied to and impoverished by their leaders. Nevertheless, for the time being the Palestinians and Israelis are stuck with committed terrorists at the helm of the Palestinian Authority. So Bush was right: Coddling Arafat and Abbas has heightened instability and insecurity in the Middle East.

Israel's next step depends in significant measure on what Hamas does with its newfound political power. Some are speculating that participation in the democratic process and shouldering the responsibilities of governing will soften Hamas. Several senior members of the Israeli national security community I spoke with are doubtful. Even though most of their electoral support may have come from people angry at Fatah about poverty, unemployment, and lack of social services, the defeat and destruction of Israel are not mere policy preferences for Hamas but cornerstones of its Islamist faith.

Nor of course is Hamas's resounding electoral success Israel's sole urgent national security threat. Ever since disengagement from Gaza was completed in the summer of 2005, increasing numbers of increasingly dangerous weapons have flowed across the border from Egypt and into the hands of a variety of terrorist groups that took up residence in Gaza on Fatah's watch. On Israel's northern border, Syria looks more and more like a failed state. On the threshold of producing a nuclear weapon in defiance of the international community and already possessing missiles capable of delivering them, Iran has an elected president who has declared the need to obliterate Israel from the map of the Middle East.

In these harsh circumstances, the least one can say is that a clear-eyed, pragmatic politics, shared by its acting prime minister and a plurality of the population, has arrived in Israel in the nick of time. ♦

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The Ice Cream Party and the Spinach Party

Three proposals to put a little pleasure back into our domestic politics

By Walter Russell Mead

During the New York City transit strike in December I fielded a lot of calls from out of town family and friends wanting to know how I was surviving. Easy, I told them. I'm telecommuting. And I'm ready to sit around in my bathrobe all day drinking herbal tea for as long as it takes.

If anything, the days when I stay home are more productive than the days I go in: There aren't so many distracting phone calls or chats with coworkers, and of course there is no commute.

With all that extra time and energy on my hands, I found myself thinking about subjects I usually stay away from: domestic subjects. And eleven years after Republicans first took over Congress, I'm amazed at how few appealing proposals are on the table.

At any one time in American politics, we have a Spinach party and an Ice Cream party. The Spinach party wants you to do a lot of unpleasant things that will do you good. The Ice Cream party wants you to be happy now. Back in the Jimmy Carter administration, the Democrats were the Spinach party: Pay higher taxes. Obey more government regulations. Turn down your thermostats. Give the canal back to Panama.

These days, however, the Republicans are sounding more and more spinachy. Finish the war. Retire later and get less when you do. Be nice, boys and girls, and stay quiet while all the good jobs go to China. You will thank us later when all our policies make you better off in the long run.

The Spinach party often has a lot of worthy policy ideas, but there is a problem: Nobody comes running when the spinach truck drives by, jingling its bells.

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I'm a Democrat myself and a foreign policy buff at that, but the absence of attractive domestic policy initiatives from the party that controls the White House and both branches of Congress is both alarming and depressing at a time when most Democrats seem incapable of addressing national security issues with any coherence. So during the transit strike I used the time I saved from commuting to put together some proposals that met three criteria: Each had to be popular, practical, and consistent with conservative principles. Some are new, some are old, but all are ideas that, it seems to me, would benefit both the American people and the political party that proposed them.

The first idea, not surprisingly given my personal circumstances the other month, has to do with telecommuting. For New Yorkers, transit strikes aren't the only hazard. Since 9/11 we have lived in a city that knows what catastrophe is. Last summer's terror attacks on the London transit system reminded us that even attacks on a much smaller scale can paralyze a major metropolitan area.

The point is that promoting telecommuting is good civil defense. Whether a disaster is manmade like a terror attack or natural like a bird flu pandemic, it's important to insulate the American economy as far as possible from the ensuing disruption.

Something like 44 million Americans now telecommute at least part time. Working with state and local governments and with business leaders, the federal government should encourage public and private enterprises to develop emergency plans that would allow as many workers as possible to work from their homes or from nearby satellite work sites during an emergency—and develop plans to protect the country's telecommunications infrastructure as well. More than half the American workforce now has jobs that can be done from home at least in part; if public and private employers put emer-

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gency plans in place, we can significantly degrade the ability of terrorists to disrupt our lives.

Hardening the telecom infrastructure and requiring enterprises to develop emergency telecommuting plans and the computer and software capacity to make them work wherever feasible would cost money, but it is something the federal government should support, and by the standards of the Homeland Security budget, the investments would be modest.

Once employers develop this emergency capacity, and once we have protected the telecommunications network, this extraordinarily powerful and flexible capacity can be used for other emergencies—like hurricanes, blizzards, oil boycotts, and transit strikes. Like the interstate highway system, originally planned to ensure the rapid movement of goods and troops in wartime, or like the Internet, originally created by DARPA for defense purposes, the telecommunications network and emergency plans would have many other uses. We could encourage the use of the emergency infrastructure in normal times, for instance, to conserve energy and meet clean air standards. Companies that met certain standards for increased telecommuting would benefit from tax reductions, and the government would look with more favor on home-office deductions for workers who telecommute.

Listen to the ice cream truck. Encouraging more employers to offer more employees more opportunities to telecommute accomplishes several popular things.

The average American worker spends about one hour per day commuting to and from work—the equivalent of six full work-weeks a year. Someone who telecommutes one day a week saves the equivalent of one work week a year. Telecommuting workers would have more time with their families and more flexible schedules. Parents with sick children—or children with elderly parents—could stay home more often and meet family responsibilities without losing the ability to work. Promoting telecommuting is a pro-family policy, since any measure that enhances the ability of caregivers to combine careers with home responsibilities is good for fathers, mothers, and children. With more adults working from home more days, America's children and young people would have more adult supervision.

Beyond that, people who spend less time commuting have more time to do what they want—more freedom. That, presumably, is what government ought to provide.

Telecommuting isn't just worker friendly. It enhances productivity. Many workers will stay home with a cold or the flu to avoid the commute and to avoid spreading disease at the office. Often, these workers—to say nothing of physically challenged workers—could work from home and put in a full day. Ninety million work days per year are missed because of colds and flu. If sufferers from colds wanted to work, and parents could work while they cared for sick kids, workers would be more productive, and we would all be better off.

Telecommuting would help address America's looming retirement and Social Security crisis. Older workers often want to keep working, but decreasing mobility makes the commute a physical challenge. Many people in their sixties retire because they are no longer comfortable facing rush hour traffic, especially at night. Others have ailments like arthritis that make physical travel more challenging but in no way impair mental acuity, ambition, or the desire to contribute to society. Older workers can work longer if they can work from home some or all of the time, paying more in taxes and earning more income and giving them more years to save for final retirement. The handicapped will have more access to more economic opportunity as physical barriers become less of a factor.

As a foreign policy buff, I can't help but note that telecommuting would take some of the international heat off the United States over global warming. For every 10 percent of the nation's workforce that telecommutes one day per week, 1.2 million gallons less fuel would be used each week, and air pollutants would decrease by 12,963 tons per week. These figures reflect only the savings from workers who stayed home. Real figures would be higher; with cars off the roads at peak hours, all drivers would get a less-congested, more hassle-free drive to work. That would reduce the energy used by all drivers, not just the lucky telecommuters at home in their bathrobes. All this would lessen our dependence on imported oil—and, since we would have emergency plans for events like oil boycotts and other serious interruptions in supply, it would make the American economy less vulnerable to foreign oil blackmail.

A serious shift to more telecommuting would put the United States ahead of European nations in the effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. And we would get there the American way: not by taxing and regulating things people like (energy and cars), but by making it easier for people to do what they want.

The government has taken a few baby steps in this direction; the private sector has been moving more quickly. However, tax incentives and direct federal spending will be necessary to move to a fully functional civil defense program. Fortunately for budget hawks, there are offsetting savings. Highways are expensive; what drives construction is often peak demand at rush hour. Telecommuting at levels that cut rush hour traffic would reduce the need for new construction and lengthen the useful life of

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infrastructure already in place. We have a lot of capable accountants with sophisticated computer programs; why not produce some estimates of construction and maintenance savings that would reduce future deficits enough to make room for the tax incentives?

Reduce vulnerability to terror, natural disaster, and political oil blackmail. Enhance quality of life with pro-family legislation. Reduce pollution and cut energy costs. Cut taxes without throwing the budget out of whack.

This doesn't sound like the spinach truck to me, and I don't think it would sound that way to voters.

Here's another ice cream idea. Maybe not on the same scale, but it's something the government could do, and something most people would like quite a lot.

Let's cut the transaction hassles and costs on residential real estate. For the large majority of American families, their homes are their largest investment. Building a national market in which people can freely and easily buy and sell homes has not only helped generations of Americans acquire property and learn about finance; it's also contributed to the flexibility of the American economy by enabling people to move around the country in search of opportunity and jobs.

Yet as anybody who has tried it knows, there's a lot of red tape and cost when it comes to buying or selling a house. Closing costs are mysterious, arcane, and to a large degree the consequence of an inefficient system that is often deliberately designed to provide comfortable niche livings for various otherwise useless professionals. The free market is taking care of some of these costs as banks keep losing loans to cheaper Internet lenders and as the competition among realtors leads to fee cutting. But there are plenty of costs that can only be cut with government pressure—to, for example, put title information into computer-searchable databases so that title searches and title insurance would cost pennies rather than hundreds of dollars.

This doesn't have to cost a lot of money. Congress could direct Fannie Mae to require gradual reductions in the fees and paperwork associated with conforming loans. States that adopted new and more efficient methods of title registry and deed conveyance could get some help from the federal government to modernize their systems.

Some people will say that this is a two-bit, Clintonian idea. But people elect politicians to help them relieve annoyances they can't fix on their own. Significantly reducing transaction costs on the most important investment most people make is exactly the kind of thing people want their representatives to do. Why shouldn't a commitment to address this issue be part of the 2006 Republican program?

Here's a bigger idea. Paying for college education is one of the biggest financial worries facing middle class and working families. Fancy liberal arts schools that let your kids live in essentially unsupervised coed dorms while majoring in such helpful subjects as deconstructionist literary theory and Why America Sucks now cost north of $40,000 per year, and even less-prestigious schools that teach more useful subjects can cost as much per year as a round-the-world cruise. Some kids come out burdened with insane levels of debt; others are frozen out of the market.

The liberal answer is that the government should pick up the ever-escalating cost of supporting Ward Churchill and his fellow astronauts of theory in the lifestyle to which they aspire. But maybe there's an alternative.

There is no reason the government should try to prevent American families who value the traditional college experience from paying hundreds of thousands of dollars, but perhaps it could offer an alternative: a federally recognized national baccalaureate (or 'national bac') degree that students could earn by demonstrating competence and knowledge.

With input from employers, the Department of Education could develop standards in fields like English, the sciences, information technology, mathematics, and so on. Students would get certificates when they passed an exam in a given subject. These certificates could be used, like the Advanced Placement tests of the College Board, to reduce the number of courses students would need to graduate from a traditional college. And colleges that accepted federal funds could be required to award credits for them.

But the certificates would be good for something else as well. With enough certificates in the right subjects, students could get a national bac without going to college. Government agencies would accept the bac as the equivalent of a conventional bachelor's degree; graduate schools and any organization receiving federal funds would also be required to accept it.

Subject exams calibrated to a national standard would give employers something they do not now have: assurance that a student has achieved a certain level of knowledge and skill. It is the easiest thing in the world today to find English majors with BA degrees from accredited colleges who cannot write a standard business letter. If national bac holders could in fact perform this and other specific tasks that employers want their new

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hires to perform, it is likely that increasing numbers of employers would demand the bac in addition to a college degree. Students who attended traditional colleges would increasingly need to pass these exams to obtain the full benefits of their degree.

For students from modest or low-income homes, as well as for part-time students trying to earn degrees while they work full time jobs or raise families, the standards would offer a cheaper, more efficient way to focus their education. Students could take prep courses that focused on the skills they actually needed to do the jobs they sought. Parents could teach their kids at home. Schools and institutes could offer focused programs. Public records could show how well students performed on the exams, offering students and parents far more accountability and information than they now get.

Such programs would be both cheaper and more flexible than conventional college degree programs. The contemporary American college is solidly grounded in the tradition of the medieval guilds. These guilds deliberately limited competition to keep fees high. In the best of cases, guild regulation also protected consumers by imposing quality and fairness standards on guild members. Few observers of American education today would argue with straight faces that the quality of undergraduate education is a major concern of contemporary guilds like the American Association of University Professors. Colleges today provide no real accounting to students, parents, or anybody else about the quality of the education they provide. No other market forces consumers to make choices on so little information.

One consequence of this poorly functioning market is to grossly exaggerate the value of "prestige" degrees. Especially these days, a lot of kids work very hard in Ivy League colleges, but others still major in booze and other diversions. Meanwhile, there are plenty of kids studying at, say, Regular State University, where they work very hard at demanding courses under tough professors. A national bac exam would allow these kids to compete on a level playing field against the Harvard and Yale grads; employers could look at the scores and see for themselves which kids knew more.

Less unearned privilege for Harvard, more opportunity for Regular State. That, once again, is what the ice cream truck brings.

As a Yalie myself and a part-time college professor to boot, I find these ideas a bit unsettling. But to voters worried about paying for education, resenting the advantages that prestige diplomas confer on a handful of mostly privileged young people from well-to-do families, and conflicted about the lack of practical focus, educational coherence, and moral guidance found at so many colleges today, an alternative route to a college degree might seem like a helpful idea.

And, by the way, to hardworking immigrants slogging through night school, to working single mothers trying to improve their lives and their kids' prospects, and to many other Americans who don't have the time or money for frills but urgently need a serious college degree, these reforms would open the door to a better life.

By setting open standards for the national bac, and by allowing anybody to offer the service of preparing students to take the exams, Congress could break the guilds' monopoly on education. A century ago higher education was still a luxury, and it scarcely mattered that it was offered only by arcane guilds in a system that took shape in the Middle Ages. But today many people of very modest means need a BA-equivalent degree to succeed in the workplace.

The power of the guilds in the goods-producing industries had to be broken before the factory system could provide the cheaper goods of the industrial revolution. The service and information revolutions require the breakup of the knowledge guilds: The professoriat is a good place to start.

The secret of politics in a democratic society is figuring out how to give the people what they want. The Democrats were masters of this in the New Deal era: Large government bureaucracies provided social programs and services that voters could not get for themselves, and a regulated national economy was seen as the ticket to mass voter prosperity. In the new economy, that formula no longer works very well, and since Reagan's first term, Republicans have made political progress primarily by dismantling pieces of the New Deal and Great Society programs that voters no longer value. At the same time, the Republican ideological preference for free markets turned from a liability into an asset: Voters came to believe that freer markets would deliver more and better goods—and jobs—than the New Deal could.

But now Republicans in turn have a problem. Demolition is no longer enough. Whether the subject is health care, education, retirement, or job security, voters want more—and what little the Republicans offer looks suspiciously like spinach. Democrats, divided on national security and still nostalgically locked into the social imagination of the New Deal era, are unable to provide a compelling alternative vision—for now. But the failure of the Republican party to develop a compelling and attractive domestic agenda, the failure to stock up the ice cream wagon and get it out on the streets, will eventually produce a major crisis for the GOP.

As for me, I'm working diligently to implement my New Year's Resolution: more days at home in the bathrobe, sipping tea. ♦

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Life of a Salesman

Or, the Adman Cometh

BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN

Bruce Barton, 1940

Time Life Pictures / Getty Images

Salesmen divide into two convenient types: those who don't for a moment believe in what they're pushing, and those who do.

The first type is more common, the second more dangerous. So many of those who have resoundingly hit the success gong believed thoroughly in their own pitch, and if you suggested that there was any element of con to their activities, they probably wouldn't know what you were talking about. None of them seems to have the least doubt in the worth of what they do, and the notion of a proper skepticism would feel as alien to them as would a Lubavitcher Hasid in Mecca.

Although he claimed a touch of doubt from time to time, Bruce Barton, who lent his name to the advertising agency of Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn (once transmuted by Harry Truman into "Bunko, Bull, Deceit & Obfuscation"), was a true believer. As an advertising man, he felt as if he were simultaneously doing capitalism's, America's, and the Lord's work. In fact, he wrote a book, *The Man Nobody Knows*, a bestseller for many years and still in print, that made the claim that Jesus was, essentially, the first great advertising man.

Joseph Epstein is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Successful businessmen are often inclined to view themselves as doing the Lord's work; or, if they are really vain, to think that the Lord was doing theirs. Lord Beaverbrook wrote a book in which he held that Jesus was the first great journalist. Malcolm Muggeridge, reviewing the book in the *New Statesman*, gave his review what has always seemed to me the best title for a book review that I've come across: "Jesus!"

The Man Everybody Knew
Bruce Barton and the Making of Modern America
by Richard M. Fried
Ivan R. Dee, 304 pp., $27.50

The historian Richard M. Fried titles his biography of Bruce Barton *The Man Everybody Knew*. The past tense is operative here. Barton's fame is by now thoroughly dissipated. But he had, as Professor Fried shows, a long and good run in which money, fame, and power were his. Fried has written a straight and fair account of the life of a man who, owing to a compelling glibness, a perfect pitch for the pithy, took this gift all the way to a congressional seat and was, at one time, even considered a possible presidential candidate. The element of iconoclasm in *The Man Everybody Knew* is present but unobtrusive. One wishes that, perhaps, Professor Fried might have gone deeper inside his subject; but, then, the thought occurs that there may have been no inside there.

Bruce Barton was born in 1886, the son of a Congregational minister. He grew up chiefly in Oak Park, Illinois, where Frank Lloyd Wright lived and Ernest Hemingway (born in 1899) also grew up. The phenomenon of the sons of ministers—preacher's kids, as they used to be called—is itself an interesting sidebar in American history. The fathers of Henry Luce (founder of Time, Inc.), Robert Hutchins (boy president of the University of Chicago), and William Benton (of the advertising agency of Benton and Bowles and, later, owner of Encyclopaedia Britannica), all of them roughly of Bruce Barton's generation, were also ministers, in some cases missionaries. Bar-

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ton himself noted that a disproportionately high number of people in *Who's Who* grew up in ministerial homes.

Luce, Hutchins, and Benton went to Yale, which George Santayana, on a visit early in the 20th century, recalls buoyed up by the spirit of muscular Christianity:

> It seemed to me at Yale as if enthusiasm were cultivated for its own sake, as flow of life, no matter in what direction. It meant intoxication, not choice. You were not taught to attain anything capable of being kept, a treasure to be laid up in heaven. You were trained merely to succeed. And in order to be sure to succeed, it was safer to let the drift of the times dictate your purposes. Make a strong pull and a long pull and a pull all together, for the sake of togetherness. Then you will win the race. A young morality, a morality of preparation, of limbering up. "Come on, fellows," it cried, "let's see who gets there first. Rah, rah, rah! Whoop-her-up! Onward Christian Soldier!"

Bruce Barton went to Amherst, but he had, from his father, the Yale spirit. He was a go-getter, a self-starter. He sold maple syrup door-to-door as a high-school kid, and pots and pans when in college. No surprise here, he was voted Most Likely to Succeed in his graduating class. After working for a year or so in Montana, he returned to Chicago to begin his career with his pen. When a publishing company he worked for went bankrupt, Barton took out what was owed him in advertising space, which he in turn sold (and wrote the copy for) to a travel agency planning a tour to Oberammergau. Barton drew the useful lesson from this that "as long as a man keeps his health and his courage, there is hardly any experience, no matter how unpleasant, that can't be turned to a profit."

As that brief quotation shows, Barton was a positive thinker, with astonishing energy added. He had a great capacity for turning out articles, stories, editorials, and speeches, all with essentially the same theme and conclusion: life may not be easy—the road is bumpy, the current swift, the eggs runny—but you can win through. As an ad man, he created the slogan for the Salvation Army: "A man may be down, but he's never out." (That, I should say, could only have been written by a man who has never come close to having been down.) He once wrote an article titled "How I Found Health in a Dental Chair," whose subject was how undergoing a root canal cleared up other health problems for him. Show Bruce Barton a silver lining and he would find gold in it.

When he became an editor of a publication called *Every Week*, Barton adopted a program for the magazine that was simplicity itself: "Our formula for *Every Week*," he later wrote, "was Youth, Love, Success, Money and Health." *Give the customer what he wants* was half of Barton's credo; when he went into advertising, which he did just after World War I, the other half became *and sell him what he doesn't really need.*

Barton had long been a dab hand at writing ad copy. During World War I he was head of publicity for the YMCA, the United War Work Campaign, and the Salvation Army. He wrote the copy to go with drawings by Norman Rockwell for a series of ads for General Electric: a case, surely, of the punishment fitting the crime. After the war, he teamed up with two contemporaries, Roy Durstine and Alex Osborn, to begin an advertising agency they called BDO. (They would later merge with the George Batten agency, whose owner died in 1918.)

This took place at a time when ad agencies were beginning to do more and more of the work of, if not outright replace, advertising departments in large companies. Radio was becoming more popular, the newspaper business was booming. Barton's timing could not have been improved.

The anacronymistic BBDO—usually said with an ampersand between the final two letters—came to stand in for all modern ad agencies. Around the time of the founding of BBDO, as Fried writes, "'Madison Avenue' was about to become a metaphor to describe an activity that was becoming a conspicuous part of American capitalism." People were doubtful about its worth, economic and moral, from its beginning.

One of Barton's perennial roles was to express doubt about, and then ultimately defend, the importance of advertising in American life. "We build of imperishable materials, we who work with words," he told an award dinner for ad men. People, he felt, "will never do what is good for them until a great deal of persuasion has been used," and advertising was there to provide the persuasion. On another occasion, he wrote: "We live in a democracy, and when you make the world safe for democracy, you automatically make it safe for advertising."

BBDO was aggressive in getting new clients, and Barton highly efficient in keeping them. He was said to have been masterly in other companies' boardrooms, chummy just to the right degree. Dale Carnegie, author of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, cited Barton for his "tremendous capacity for friendship." Which puts paid to the old proverb that holds you can't con a con man.

As an agency man, Barton was a troubleshooter and an effective closer. He could also write an ad about a doctor saving the life of a child because the doctor happened to be driving a car built by General Motors (a BBDO client). He was never much troubled by the truth quotient in his own copy.

While doing all his work at BBDO, Barton kept up a fairly active freelance life, placing articles and editorial bits in many of the mass-circulation magazines of the day. He earned $50,000 per annum on his journalism alone. He lived at good Manhattan addresses, kept his own horse, had his name in gossip columns, befriended the famous, was married with three children. Did I neglect to mention that he was strikingly handsome? He was to all appearances a happy man.

The one hitch in the early years of this otherwise onward and upward story is that, as Fried notes, Barton suffered from insomnia and hypochondria. Conscience, one may be permitted to doubt, hadn't anything to do with either problem. More likely his mind raced at night thinking up new ad campaigns and devising further euphemisms. But it took more than

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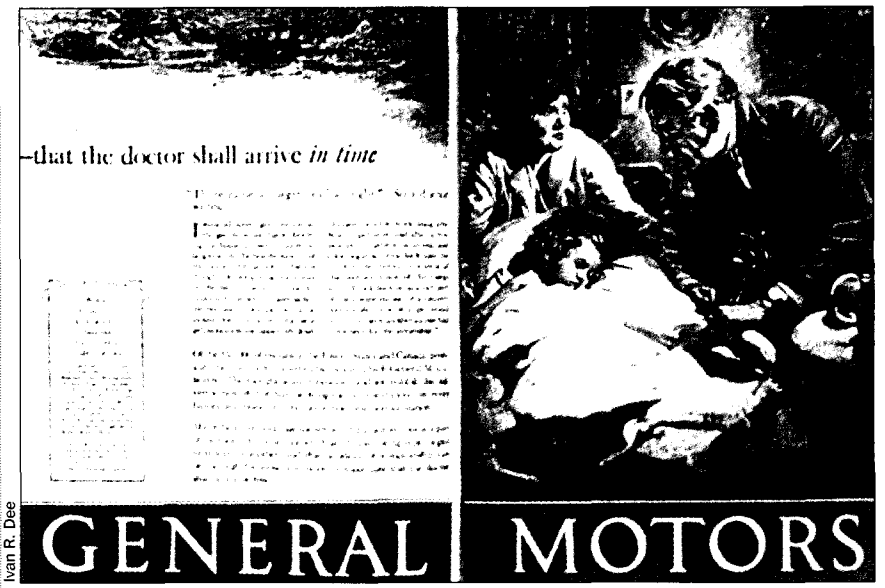
such minor auxiliary miseries to stop the powerful inner locomotive driving the Barton Express.

As if things weren't going smoothly enough, in 1925 Bruce Barton published his book about Jesus Christ, which was a smashing success. Fried aptly characterizes Barton's intention as "to reconnect the realm of the spirit with the world of hustle and commerce." In it, Barton took the mystery out of religion and put a cheering section in its place. No namby-pamby Jesus Christ, no sissified Sunday school Jesus for Bruce Barton, who presented a sinewy, a light and cheerful, and manly Jesus. His Jesus was an executive, a powerful salesman who, *mutatis mutandis*, might have played tailback for Yale. As for the Apostles, Jesus, in Barton's words, "picked up 12 men from the bottom ranks of business and forged them into an organization that conquered the world." Onward corporate soldier!

The Man Nobody Knows was praised by the popular clergymen of the day, though serious people, among them Reinhold Niebuhr, then a young minister in Detroit, in a review titled "Jesus as Efficiency Expert," panned it for its smugness. Fundamentalist Protestants also roasted the book. But the success of Barton's book, propelled in part by his own genius for publicity and self-promotion, could not be stopped by mere criticism. The book sold more than 250,000 copies in its first 18 months in print; by 1944 nearly 487,000 copies had been printed; and, Fried reports, "by 1959, when a new edition was being readied, sales figures totaled 726,890, if not more, in nine different editions. . . . For the rest of the 20th century, *The Man* was in print more often than not—in whole, in part, in combination with other works."

The success of his Jesus book widened Barton's fame: He was no longer an adman merely but now a publicist-philosopher. He had joined the punditi in a big-time way. The *Atlantic* asked him to review his fellow Oak Parker Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, which he praised, his only negative note being his wish that the talented novelist would soon write about "more respectable people." He had become a boldface, his name appearing in smart gossip columns. He was now the sort of man reporters interviewed as he came down ships' gangplanks for his views on the economy, European politics, the state of the nation.



Ivan R. Dee

Humanizing the client

One of the problems for a layman writing a successful book on religion is that it sets one up for dispensing moral advice in a public way, which in turn is almost certain to entail scandal down the road, usually of the kind featuring, as Mencken once called it, "non-Euclidian sex." In Barton's case, a young woman working for him at BBDO flattered him into her bed. Only later did he learn that she was married, and when the husband threatened to sue Barton for alienation of affections, he bought the couple off for $25,000. She later tried to blackmail him, claiming she had written a novel about their love affair, and eventually went to prison for doing so. Fried ends his account of this misalliance by noting that "Barton emerged less mangled in reputation than he might have," adding that "the affair had to have jolted Barton's marriage, but it survived."

After his success in advertising and publishing—if not in sexual adventuring—politics was the natural next step for Barton. His gambling instincts were near perfect, and he played the great American trifecta of Religion, Business, and Politics, and made it pay. On the national level, his first big horse, ridden before the success of his Jesus book, was Calvin Coolidge, a fellow Amherst graduate, whom he tried to promote into the Republican presidential nomination in the 1920 election. Warren Harding won the election, with Coolidge as his vice president. When Harding died in office, Barton's man ascended to the presidency. Barton worked for Coolidge without payment then, and in his successful reelection campaign in 1924, but the payment came in giving him the reputation of a savvy adviser, a political insider.

As Fried points out, other admen had been involved in political campaigns before Bruce Barton. But Barton's specialty was, somehow, to make himself and his candidates out as men who stood for both tradition and progress, the solid values of the past combined with the shiny promise of the future. He also early sensed that personality was becoming as important—perhaps more important—to politics as a politician's positions on the issues, questions, and problems of the day. He advised his candidates to knock off the whistle-stop oratory and think more about the possibilities of mass communication.

Radiating sincerity was Barton's specialty, and it was the quality of sincerity with which he attempted to endow the candidates he supported. He did this through the media of the day: placing carefully constructed interviews with them (often written by him), writing their speeches, dragging their families into press photographs.

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He beseeched Herbert Hoover to have photographs taken of himself "fishing or tree-chopping, something that shows him a human being."

As for Barton's own politics, Fried remarks that he "could most often be found on the conservative side of a given issue, [but] he was never a standpatter, still less a reactionary." Barton opposed Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the New Deal, but never with the insane hatred that true-believer Republicans of the day brought to the job. He even allowed that Roosevelt had a real talent for speaking "in advertising language"—than which, from Barton, there could be no higher praise.

In 1937, Barton ran for Congress from the 17th District of New York, known in those days as the "silk-stocking" district, to fill out the term of an incumbent who died in office. He won, and won again in 1938, campaigning both times as a liberal Republican. He used the same technique of the hokey narrative in his political rhetoric (stories about little people besieged by government) as he used in some of his advertising (stories of people's lives being vastly improved by products).

Barton claimed in his political campaigns that there were already too many lawyers in Congress, and that more salesmen were needed; salesmen, he contended, "know people." He would later say much the same about advertising men: "We in the advertising business know more about people than politicians do." The thought of a Congress loaded with ad men may, at first, seem terrifying, but then one realizes that the majority of the people now there are mostly in office owing to the machinations of advertising men and publicists of one sort or another.

Barton's announced plan as a congressman was to repeal a law every week, though he found that regress was not all that easy. He was better at garnering publicity for himself as a "fresh voice," "the most popular member of Congress," and a man with a ready quotable line for the press. Such was Barton's fame that he was actually spoken of as a presidential candidate in the 1940 election.

He ran, instead for the Senate, on an isolationist and anti-third-term-for-FDR platform, but it was no sale. In a speech, Roosevelt once used the phrase "Martin, Barton, and Fish" to mock three Republican Congressman—Joe Martin, Bruce Barton, and Hamilton Fish—who had voted against defense apppropriations; the phrase came to stand in as short hand for military unpreparedness. Barton claimed it cost him many Jewish votes in this Senate race. He was in any case routed by a now-forgotten Democrat named James Mead.

Like the elderly who feel that the world is going to hell because they soon won't any longer be in it, so Barton, now out of electoral politics, began

With Lassie

Ivan R. Dee

to feel that the United States was doomed. "It was a good republic while it lasted," he would say. The truth is that he had no more political acumen than anyone else. He was against the Marshall Plan, not too good on race, and should have got splinters in his bottom for his fence-sitting on Senator Joseph McCarthy, neither joining nor rebuking him.

Out of the political wars, Barton went back to doing what he did best, which was advertising. BBDO's business continued to grow: Standard Oil of California, Dodge, the 3M Company, United Fruit. (People of a certain age will recall Chiquita Banana, who warned us that we must "never put bananas in the refrigerator, no, no, no.") In 1954, BBDO was third among all American advertising agencies, with total billings of $148 million. Much of this was because of Barton's skill at manipulating words and clients.

Barton lived long enough to see advertising roundly attacked. Novels and movies—*The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, *The Hucksters*—began to appear in which advertising men were thought the ultimate hollow men. Vance Packard wrote *The Hidden Persuaders*, in which he made them out not hollow at all but filled with malevolent tricks. Madison Avenue began to replace Wall Street as the synecdoche and center of all capitalist sin.

How hard this hit Bruce Barton is not really known. It couldn't have gone down easily for him. Advertising was his politics, quite possibly his religion, his only mode of thought: He called capitalism "the system of hustle and hope," which sounds like nothing so much as an ad for it, too.

Fried concludes that Barton was more divided in himself than he may have given others to believe. He claims that Barton began to grow tired of lengthy and repetitious ads, and longed for more candid advertising. He quotes Barton wondering why an ad might not say, simply: "Lucky Strike is paying for this half of the ball game in the hope of pleasing you, not annoying you. If you haven't tried Luckies, we hope you will. . . . If you are a Lucky smoker already, please credit us for not boring you by telling you a lot of things you already know." But this kind of utterance only earned Barton the epithet, from a colleague at a rival ad agency, of "a preacher in a whorehouse."

People nowadays do not get quite so worked up about billboards defacing the countryside, ads creating hopelessly artificial needs, the hypocritical contradiction of the *New Yorker*'s liberal politics and its posh advertising pages, advertising itself as evidence of a coarsening and hopelessly vulgar American culture. To most of us, advertising seems at its best mildly entertaining, at its worst a minor nuisance. Were he a young man today, Bruce Barton would probably not have been tempted by it, and instead would likely have gone straight to divinity school. ♦

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'Windsor Castle' (ca. 1818) by William Havell

Corbis / Stapleton Collection

Britain's River

The life and times of the stream that divides London.

BY MATTHEW PRICE

As rivers go, England's Thames can't compete with the epic length of the Nile or the muddy grandeur of the Mississippi. At only 215 miles, it isn't even the longest river in Britain. But as Jonathan Schneer argues in this muddled book, the Thames remains special for its role in British history: "[W]ho would deny that the Thames is more an avenue of history than any other waterway," he asks, "that it is a national river in a way that other rivers are not."

The Thames
by Jonathan Schneer
Yale, 360 pp., $35

Aside from being unfair to the Mississippi, this is an awfully large conceit to float on such a little river. The Thames has undoubtedly been a waterway of strategic and commercial importance—for London, especially—but Schneer somehow manages to overstate its importance. Schneer's claims are grandiose, but he issues them with hesitation. He frequently runs aground in a fog of vacillation: "The Thames may or may not be Britain's river," he concedes. And then follows with "usually a river is just a river." By the end, he is in despair and throws up his hands: "Perhaps the Thames is more bound up with regional than national identities." The man cannot make up his mind.

There is a good book to be written about the Thames in English history and culture; this one just isn't it. From an eccentric, history-haunted visionary like Peter Ackroyd we would get a mystical, slightly daft, gloriously overwrought exercise in historical sociology, complete with interviews with Dickens and Turner, and the odd Druid. You won't find anything as kooky—or fun—in Schneer's *Thames*. Lurching uneasily between strained lyricism and academic cultural studies waffle—he makes noises about the Thames's relationship to the "ongoing construction of England"—Schneer ponders "some of the river's shifting meanings and their connections with the national story over many millennia."

Schneer, however, doesn't have much confidence in this tack, for we also read that while "understandings of the Thames have sometimes contributed to definitions of the nation as a whole, they have not done so always, and they have rarely done crucially." Er, okay. For this reader, national construction is an irritating distraction. The river doesn't always run through it.

Schneer's story flags most when the Thames is simply there as (he admits) "a backdrop" to famous events. The Magna Carta was hammered out in the fields of Runnymede alongside the Thames, but Schneer's rehash contributes nothing to our understanding of this seminal event, or the life of the river itself. So consumed is he with the Thames's "interconnectedness with so much history" that, at times, the river disappears from sight altogether.

When Schneer hews closely to the particulars of the river, his account picks up a bit. As he notes, the Thames provided a stage for a good bit of royal spectacle over the centuries, perhaps none more spectacular than Charles II's "Aqua Triumphalis" in 1662, which marked the House of Stuart's return to the English throne. After a decade of Cromwellian austerity, the capital reveled in good times. Crowds thronged to the riverbanks to see the gaudy procession, which the diarist John Evelyn vividly described as "the most magnificent triumph ever floated on the Thames, considering the innumerable number of boates & Vessels, dressd and adornd with all imaginable Pomp: but above all, the Thrones, Arches, Pageants & other representations, stately barges of the Lord Mayor & Companies, with various Inventions, musique, & Peales of Ordnance both from vessels and shore."

But the river wasn't merely a royal playground. A couple of times a century, the Thames would freeze over, and enterprising souls would set up rollicking "frost fairs," where noisy vendors hawked goods, food, and drink. Interestingly, Schneer notes that "frost fairs have disappeared not because of global warming" but because London Bridge,

Matthew Price is a critic and journalist in Brooklyn.

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whose mass of pilings blocked the flow of ice, was pulled down in 1831.

In the Victorian era, the Thames had something of a schizophrenic identity. To the west of London, towards Oxford and beyond, it flowed through the countryside; perch and trout swam in the currents. This was the Thames that would inspire William Morris. But downstream, the river oozed with filth.

London's unchecked growth and bustling port took the toll on the health of Old Father Thames. The so-called Great Stink in the summer of 1858 was a defining moment. As temperatures soared, vile odors wafted into the Houses of Parliament. Benjamin Disraeli recoiled from the "Stygian pool reeking with ineffable and intolerable horrors," while a leading paper thundered that "gentility of speech is at an end. It stinks: and whoso once inhales the stink can never forget it, and may count himself lucky if he lives to remember it."

Enter the engineer Joseph Bazalgette, whom Disraeli tapped to fix the problem. In one of those Victorian feats of ingenuity, Bazalgette dramatically altered both London and the Thames. By 1864, thousands of laborers had laid some 300 million bricks, creating a vast 82-mile sewer system that carried some 150 million gallons of sewage a day out to sea. Bazalgette battled the Thames's treacherous currents, reclaiming over 30 acres of land and significantly narrowing the river in the process.

Schneer doesn't do nearly enough with the lurid side of 19th-century Thames life, so pungently described by Bella Bathurst in her recent book *The Wreckers*: the world of rat catchers, body snatchers, and "mud larks," who one Victorian journalist marvelously described as "aquatic itinerants . . . a class of low and miserable beings who are accustomed to Grub in the River at low water for Old Ropes, Metals and Coals." This is the dark, seedy Thames of Dickens—read the sublime opening pages of *Our Mutual Friend* for a taste—who barely rates a mention in Schneer's account.

Nowadays, the Thames is, perhaps, a less interesting place. It is certainly less dangerous (and surely smells better). After a devastating tidal surge roared up the Thames estuary and flooded much of southeast England in 1953, politicians and planners mooted schemes for a barrage across the river. After two decades of wrangling, and eight years of construction, the Thames Barrier was unveiled in 1982 at Woolwich, east of London's central core. It is a beautiful, functional, and justly applauded structure that would do Bazalgette proud. Its conical piers, fashioned from gleaming stainless steel, are reminiscent of the soaring curves of Sydney's opera house.

London's vast port, which bustled with some of the largest docks in the world, hummed along until the 1960s, withstanding near destruction by the Luftwaffe during World War II, but not shifts in the global economy in the decades after. London's Docklands were transformed into a rather sterile office district—which clearly displeases Schneer, who wrings his hands over plucky East Enders displaced by hordes of yuppie brokers, and the new barons of Fleet Street who took up residence in the Canary Wharf tower.

Less colorful, yes, but one more evolution in a teeming city that is endlessly changing. ♦

Second Time Around

For columnist Maureen Dowd, recycling begins at the office. BY CHARLOTTE ALLEN

What amazed me after I finished this book (it didn't take long) is how many reviewers actually took it seriously. They thought it was a genuine piece of social commentary on the topic Why Feminism Failed, along the lines of Susan Faludi's *Backlash* or Susan Douglas and Meredith Michaels's *The Mommy Myth*. So the reviewers typically launched into social commentary of their own, writing solemn mini-essays on various issues that they were certain Dowd had raised.

Are Men Necessary?
When Sexes Collide
by Maureen Dowd
Putnam Adult, 352 pp., $25.95

Here's Rebecca Traister in *Salon*: "Dowd's 338-page cultural analysis and memoir of sexual politics is a blistering critique of modern gender relations. . . . She's asking some very uncomfortable questions of her male and female readers, and presenting some startling answers, including the winked-at implication that, as the title suggests, men may not be necessary anymore."

Here's Katie Roiphe, sounding like one of her own term papers at Princeton as she writes this mouthful in *Slate*: "Because the issues surrounding sexual politics are so emotionally charged, so laden with contradiction, so racked with ambivalence and irrationality, it is especially important not to neglect nuance. One of the failures of the feminist movement in the first place was a reliance on easy aphorisms, and the schematic worldview that such aphorisms implied. . . . Dowd herself criticizes the feminists of the 1970s for imagining a sea of identical, sexless women in navy blazers descending on the workplace."

Even the conservative Ross Douthat, reviewing for this magazine's online sister, felt constrained to pull his chin: "[I]t's worth at least suggesting, by way of counterpoint, that the world we inhabit isn't one in which the feminists have been backlashed into retreat for

Charlotte Allen is the author, most recently, of The Human Christ.

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the last 40 years—it's a world where feminism *won*, at least insofar as it could, and the sexual confusion that so dismays Dowd is the unexpected consequence of its victory."

I had to ask: Did these people read the same book that I did? *Are Men Necessary?* isn't a treatise about "uncomfortable questions" or "nuance" or even "sexual confusion." It's a collection of Maureen Dowd's old columns for the *New York Times*. If you read Dowd regularly, or even only now and then (as I do—or did, before the *Times* electronically quarantined her in TimesSelect, which you have to pay for, and I'm too cheap), your overwhelming sense won't be that of a "blistering critique of modern gender relations," but of *déjà vu* all over again. Dowd says that men spurn smart, independent women like her because they prefer the company of housemaids and other subservient types to whom they can feel superior. Sorry, but I read that one in the *Times* last year, when the movie *Spanglish* came out. I can't quite swear on the Bible that there isn't a word in *Are Men Necessary?* that hasn't already seen print previously, but I think I'd be pretty close to the truth if I did.

Some of the apparently recycled columns are musty indeed, dating all the way back to 1995, when Dowd was promoted from the *Times*'s Washington bureau to the op-ed page, and promptly wrote columns on such subjects as why there weren't more women news anchors, or pregnant women news anchors, on the Big Three networks. So she interviewed NBC's Brian Williams and asked him, "Are you an android?" I guess you could call such antics a blistering critique of modern gender relations, but my first thought was: Who watches Big Three network news anymore?

On the other hand, as if to show us that she actually does keep up, Dowd peppers her book with *aperçus*—or at least attempted witticisms—about events that happened only yesterday: the Larry Summers flap (the Harvard president "said women were not good at math"), the election of Pope Benedict ("the Vatican thought that what it needed to bring it into modernity was the oldest pontiff since the 18th century"), and her favorite target, George W. Bush's nomination of John Roberts, first as associate justice of the Supreme Court, and then as chief justice ("Only a man gets promoted *before* he gets the job").

Conspicuously missing from this roster of up-to-the-minuteness is Dowd's most famous quotation of 2005: her assertion that the "moral authority" of Crawford-camping photo-op mom Cindy Sheehan was "absolute." Of course, Sheehan's 15 minutes of fame expired abruptly after she complained on *HuffingtonPost.com* that people were paying more attention to Hurricane Rita than they were to her.

Maureen Dowd

Zuma Press / Nancy Kaszerman

Nonetheless, fast-moving events have a way of rendering obsolete even Dowd's most determined effort to show she's on top of them. I had to chuckle when I read this paragraph on page 310: "There was a time when I would get furious and fire off an angry note if someone cast me in a catfight with a colleague. I assumed that catfights would fade as women progressed. They seemed so retro." Judith Miller, call your office. Or rather, your former office.

Furthermore, the task of stitching together dozens of 750-word *Times* columns into a cohesive book-length manuscript clearly proved too daunting for Dowd. Sometimes she uses the device of the truly awkward transition, as in this segue between male news anchors and the election of the pope: "It's interesting that media big shots are moving away from patriarchal, authoritarian voice-of-God figures, even as voice-of-God figures, such as the Catholic Church and elected officials, are building up their authoritarian patriarchies." (Don't even try to parse that sentence, much less figure out what it means.)

Elsewhere Dowd simply relies on typography—three centered asterisks followed by a fancily-set incipit to the next paragraph—to signal to her readers that she couldn't think of any logical way to link, for example, bonobo sex and male nipples, two topics that fall hard upon each other in *Are Men Necessary?*, giving the reader the impression that its author suffers from adult ADD. Even the book's subtitle, *When Sexes Collide*, is a non sequitur. (And shouldn't it be *When* the *Sexes Collide?*)

This is strange, because Dowd's acknowledgments contain a name-dropper's wish list of "infinitely creative and giving friends"—Leon Wieseltier, "Tom" Friedman, Michael Kinsley, Alec Baldwin, Chris Matthews, George Stephanopoulos, "Michi" Kakutani, Nora Ephron, Sally Quinn—without whom, she says, the book couldn't have been written. Couldn't one of those creative and giving souls—Leon or Michael or Michi or Nora—have sat down with Dowd and edited the darned thing for her?

The book's most disturbing aspect is its unsettling undertone of unspecified resentment at the male sex. What are we to make of a sentence such as this one: "Americans like to see women who wear the pants beaten up and humiliated"? Is this just another lame Dowd witticism? (Her examples are Martha Stewart, who, having been convicted of a felony, arguably deserved a little humiliation,

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and Hillary Clinton, who may well be the next president of the United States.) There are all those references in the book to the men who are "scared" of Dowd, who are "threatened by female power," who insinuate that she is "bitter about men." I'm in no position to ruminate about the love life of Maureen Dowd, age 52 and single (although astonishingly good-looking), but there is something disconcerting about a book that alternately harangues men to "snap out" of their "bollixed up" attitudes toward dating "high-achieving women" and titles one of its chapters "Why the Well-Hung Y Is Wilting Even As the X Is Excelling."

This is all too bad, because Maureen Dowd can be a sharp, entertaining, and even devastating writer when she wants to be—as in a reminiscence of the insufferably self-righteous Mary McGrory's habit of using the younger guests at her soirees as free hired help, or her skewering of the professional feminists who announced to a woman that they would be happy to service Bill Clinton on their knees because of his track record on abortion rights. And this recollection of sighting Monica Lewinsky at a Washington restaurant, where Dowd was dining with *Time* editor Michael Duffy, displays both genuinely funny, self-deprecating humor and a novelist's flair for dialogue and detail:

> The strong jawline and wide smile turning down at the edges were familiar.
>
> I am, after all, a trained observer.
>
> "That girl looks a little like Monica," I told Duffy.
>
> "It is Monica, stupid," he replied.

Maureen Dowd might be a silly social theorist and a downright dud at putting a book together, but she has a genuine future as a writer of chick-lit.

And won't someone please take the hint and find a date for this lovely and stylish redhead who never has a bad hair day? I suggest Frank Rich. Yes, he's a little grim, but he's on the *Times* staff, and he can't stand George W. Bush, either. See, Frank, you and Maureen already have something in common—so get on your cell phone now. ♦

Promising Land

There is Jewish-American history outside of New York.

BY MARK BAUMAN

Jewish Life in Small-Town America: A History
by Lee Shai Weissbach
Yale, 448 pp., $45

Because of historical forces and cultural norms, in America Jews have been a remarkably urban people.

In 1878, 71 percent lived in the 26 metropolitan areas that boasted at least a thousand Jewish inhabitants, whereas over half of the general population did not live in cities until 1920. With the increased influx of Jews from Eastern Europe, and particularly Russia, from 1881 to the 1920s, the number and proportion of Jews in American cities rose ever higher. And yet a tiny but important segment chose to move into the American hinterland, where they exerted disproportionate influence on civic and cultural uplift in towns and smaller cities. Downtown business clusters made it appear that Jews dominated retail trade. Jews also created their own community life and institutions.

Lee Shai Weissbach, professor of history at the University of Louisville, has studied the lives of Jews who lived in these communities with Jewish populations between 100 and 1,000 during what he calls their "classic era," roughly 1887 to 1927. The period marks both the rise and decline (in isolation as well as number) of such communities. Having published several scholarly articles on the subject, this seminal volume incorporates 15 years of research.

Weissbach maintains that, while broad similarities exist between Jewish experiences throughout the country, local environments—whether they be small towns, or commercial or industrial metropolises—exerted tremendous influence over patterns of adjustment. In the cities, Jews participated in a greater diversity of occupations, and a substantial working class was employed in the textile industry. Thus, labor union membership and socialist inclinations marked participation in city life for many East European Jewish immigrants.

Few of those drawn to small towns served as industrial workers, and almost all rose quickly into the middle class through retail trade. For those so inclined, socialism became an intellectual exercise rather than a class-conscious activity, and unionism was almost unheard of. The Depression probably had a lesser impact on small-town Jews because of the independent economic niche they filled. A result of close kinship ties in an environment where they knew everyone, small-town Jews "never felt alone or anonymous," as some might have felt in cities. Still, with fewer potential spouses available because of smaller populations, Jews in small towns were more likely to intermarry than their urbanized brethren.

The contrasts seem endless. Jews found greater acceptance and integration in small towns than in cities, although they still felt the barbs of anti-Semitism and insensitivity, and were virtually always viewed as separate and distinctive. With populations only capable of supporting one or two congregations, and while some conflict existed between Central and East European, Reform and Orthodox, cooperation and accommodation were more the norm than in large metropolises with numerous, competing syna-

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gogues and community institutions. For small-town Jews, synagogues served as all-purpose centers of social as well as religious life; but erecting buildings and obtaining the services of rabbis, and keeping them beyond a few years, posed real challenges.

Weissbach persuasively argues that the Jewish encounter in what he calls "triple-digit" communities deserves independent study, even beyond what it reflects in contrast to city life.

Yale University Press / Courtesy of Margaret R. Grundy Memorial Library

Spector's Clothing Store, Bristol, Pa., 1907

Immigrant Jews were drawn to these locations because transportation and natural resources made them market centers. Kin and *landsleit* networks often defined the movement of people to specific locations, and eased adjustment. Many started with little capital as peddlers, obtaining goods from Jewish wholesalers, while others, after first having accumulated capital elsewhere in America, began as shopkeepers. Friends and relatives served as clerks and opened satellite stores. From the Civil War to well into the 20th century, the road to department stores and success in a variety of businesses, and ultimately the professions, beckoned. Mobility in and out of towns as an area's opportunity came and went was as typical as economic mobility.

During the 19th century, Jews from central Europe started congregations and burial and benevolent societies, a pattern replicated during the era of mass migration by Jews from Eastern Europe. In fact, contrary to the image of "German" Jewish town formation, most of these communities were established by "Russian" Jews. Even where earlier Jewish communities existed, the newcomers usually exerted substantial influence because of their larger numbers. In "vibrant Jewish enclaves," writes Weissbach, these traditionalists created "miniature version[s] of the quasi-mythical 'Lower East Side' of New York City."

Yiddish culture, Zionism, and ethnic businesses and consciousness flourished. Nonetheless, these Jews underwent a similar process of acculturation as their predecessors, and by the time of World War II, traditional practices and observances had eroded. Conservative and Reform congregations took the place of most Orthodox *shuls*, and the Americanization of East European Jewish culture was more complete in small towns than in cities.

Although some of the small towns rose into medium or even large-sized cities after 1945, most either declined, stagnated, or came under the shadow of larger metropolises. They became "places of memory." Where and when economic opportunity lessened, Jews moved out. Yet university towns and recreation/retirement havens witnessed the revitalization of Jewish communities during the last decades of the 20th century, and into the present. The processes of community life, death, and mobility continue unabated as Jews adapt and fill ever-changing niches.

Weissbach presents statistics for 490 small towns, although he focuses on 12. The statistics—even his multiple examples intended to humanize the story are data-heavy—and discussions of prior demographic studies and the use of sources are important for researchers, especially for comparative purposes. But they make for arduous reading, particularly in the early chapters. Weissbach uses primary sources quite creatively. Congregational dues and the makeup of local Industrial Removal Organization committees show that Jews in small towns tended to be neither rich nor poor but thoroughly middle class. Jewish Publication Society membership lists illustrate ties with larger Jewish communities and a cosmopolitan outlook. Student rabbis, along with circuit-riding rabbis and non ordained "ministers," conducted services in the absence of sustained rabbinical leadership, and their reports bring these "triple-digit communities" to life.

Much of American Jewish history has been written as New York Jewish history writ large. But because of the large size and concentration of the New York Jewish population, its story is really unique and distinctive. Professor Weissbach reminds us that the story of American Jewry is truly national in scope.

Providing strong arguments against distinctions based on region, *Jewish Life in Small-Town America* is a masterful, nuanced work that offers a standard for future histories of individual communities, and fascinating insights into the variety of both American Jewish experiences and small-town American cultures. Regardless of distinctions based on adaptation to local environments, it emphasizes the strength of old-world religion and culture in assisting immigrant Jews to find a home in America, even while maintaining group identity and culture. ♦

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Good Intentions

Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World, *and not finding it.* BY JOHN PODHORETZ

If all it took to make a great comic movie was a great comic idea, the writer-director-actor Albert Brooks would be Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, and Frank Capra rolled into one. No one has ever come up with catchier and more enticing comic concepts than Brooks.

Consider: A middle-aged man with commitment issues moves back in with his septuagenarian mother to find out what went wrong with him (*Mother*). Two spoiled yuppies who decide to "drop out from society" lose all their money in a Las Vegas gambling spree and have to make ends meet in an Arizona trailer park (*Lost in America*). A man dies young and finds himself on trial in purgatory for the crime of having given in to his neurotic fears (*Defending Your Life*). A documentary filmmaker panicked that his footage of a middle-class family is just too boring sets their house on fire to get some drama going (*Real Life*).

And now he has made a movie called *Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World* with another brilliant conceit: He, Albert Brooks, is asked by the State Department—in the person of former senator Fred Thompson—to find out what makes Muslims chuckle. Brooks, who is at loose ends because he fails to get cast in the title role of Penny Marshall's remake of *Harvey*, is hesitant to accept Thompson's offer primarily because Thompson wants him to write a 500-page report. Thompson tells Brooks not to worry because no one will actually read the report, but throughout the picture all Brooks really seems to care about is how many pages his assistant is managing to compile. The only interesting bit of information he collects from a streetcorner interview is that Polish jokes work everywhere on the planet.

Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World is full of funny bits, terrific one-liners, and comic situations that stay with you long after the movie is over.

Warner Brothers

An Iranian who watches Brooks bomb in his attempt to do standup in front of a Muslim audience is disappointed to discover that, in America, comics do not get punished by the authorities when they put on a bad show. Officials at Al Jazeera offer Brooks a job starring in a new sitcom entitled *That Darn Jew*. The only way Brooks can get anyone to laugh at his comedy routines is to get them high, and to get high himself. And in the course of trying to get enough material, he nearly starts a war between India and Pakistan. He finally returns home to an eBay-crazed wife, who declares proudly that he is "the Henry Kissinger of comedy" as troops mass along the border in Kashmir.

Brooks's movies are chock-a-block with great notions. There's the Past Lives Pavilion in *Defending Your Life*, where the newly dead are guided through a tour of their karmic journey by a hologram of Shirley MacLaine. In *Lost in America*, Brooks attempts to convince a casino manager to refund the $100,000 his wife lost at the tables by proposing an ad campaign selling the place as "the casino with a heart." The has-been screenwriter in *The Muse* gets a meeting with Spielberg—only it turns out to be Stan Spielberg, Steven's cousin, who has a tiny office on a studio backlot about a mile-and-a-half from Brooks's parking space.

But great bits do not great movies make, and like most of Brooks's other movies, *Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World* seems less like a fully realized piece of work and more like a first draft. Brooks has been making movies for more than 25 years, and with the exception of the splendidly acidic *Lost in America*, he just can't pull them off. It's as though he exhausts himself devising his ingenious concepts on the page and doesn't have the directorial energy to give them life on the screen. His movies begin with deadpan wit, and then about 40 minutes in, they die. In *Looking for Comedy*, the movie's death coincides with a long sequence in which we watch Brooks perform his standup routine from the 1970s in 2005 New Delhi. The material is incredibly unfunny, and yet we are forced to watch every last second of it. Brooks wants us to share the comic's experience of failing before an audience, but all he does is bore us silly.

Brooks's great subject is vanity and its destructive effects, and in the manner of Jack Benny, he uses himself as his own target. Alas, he hasn't been humble enough to submit his own scripts to the rigors of a more talented director, who might find a way to infuse life and vigor into them—and create a genuine comic classic, rather than an intriguing might-have-been like *Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World*. ♦

John Podhoretz, a columnist for the New York Post, *is* THE WEEKLY STANDARD'S *movie critic.*

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"He gazed at her through the ocean air blue of dawn. Her skin was a butter pecan. Her hair a tangle of sunscape yellow. And her eyes were a flash of acadia green."

Books in Brief

***Spook: Science Tackles the Afterlife* by Mary Roach (Norton, 288 pp., $24.95).** At a recent reading of her new book, Mary Roach entertained her audience by relating a criticism leveled at it in an *Elle* magazine reader review. The reader, obviously hoping for some serious answers regarding the mysteries of the hereafter, complained that after finishing the book she did not know one bit more about the afterlife.

Perhaps the reader, in her zealous pursuit of the higher truths, skipped the introduction to the book, in which Roach explains her approach to spiritual matters in this work. Roach investigates scientific research into the afterlife not to provide answers to any age-old questions. Instead, she revels in the fact that "the more you expose the intricacies and realities of the situation, the less clear-cut things become."

Roach is not one to shy away from a difficult topic. Her last book, *Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers*, delved gleefully into the strange world of cadavers used as crash-test dummies, subjects in ballistic testing, and myriad other unexpected functions. Her keen appreciation for the bizarre also serves her well in *Spook*, which she describes as "not a story about spirits, but of the human spirit."

Roach approaches the spiritual realm with an admittedly skeptical tone, but one that is tempered by an enthusiasm towards her subject and a genuine interest in those (often peculiar) people who study it. This curiosity takes her to the far corners of the earth—from India, to England, to North Carolina.

Despite these interesting diversions (and footnotes full of the exuberant, yet unrelated excesses of her research—including tidbits on horned men and leprechauns), Roach does offer some insights into the psychology of our interest in the afterlife, and how we have physically investigated such an ethereal subject. She notes that it is "the requisite untimely loss of a loved one, which so often sparks an interest in the hereafter among otherwise orthodox scientists." It is in our human nature to seek knowledge about our world and, when forced to confront it, the world beyond.

I, like the *Elle* reader, know little more about the afterlife now. But I can admit to an increased sense of wonder at the human spirit and the drive to understand a little more about those things that remain so elusively beyond our comprehension.

—Bridget Harrington

***Sucker Punch: The Hard Left Hook that Dazed Ali and Killed King's Dream* by Jack Cashill (Nelson Current, 304 pp., $24.99).** In his prime, Muhammad Ali was, without a doubt, one of the greatest fighters of all time. To many on the left, however, he has become much more than a simple boxer.

Cashill's new book is an attempt to debunk the myth that the New Left created about Ali in his time; while he admits the boxer was great, he points out that the man was flawed, perhaps unforgivably so. Although Ali comes off terribly (especially in his race-baiting and public humiliation of Joe Frazier, and the treatment of his wives), his handlers and sympathizers come off as pure evil.

From Elijah Muhammad to Don King to Howard Cosell, those responsible for crafting the Ali legend are torn down and described, respectively, as a murderer, a crook, and an opportunistic coward. Cashill is especially tough on Cosell and his colleagues in the media, whom he holds just as responsible as Ali for driving whites and blacks apart in the 1960s.

Those interested in reading about Ali's exploits in the ring will be disappointed by *Sucker Punch*. If you're interested in the beatification process for a false saint of the left, however, you've come to the right place.

—Sonny Bunch

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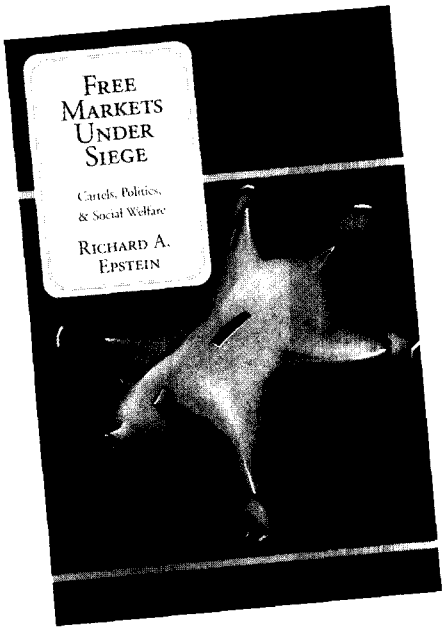
Critical Reading from Hoover

Attaining the Proper Constitutional and Economic Balance



In this insightful book, Richard Epstein outlines the history of interplay between the constitutional doctrine and economic development and affirms the importance of competitive markets.

In *Free Markets under Siege,* Richard Epstein draws on his extensive knowledge of history, law, and economics to examine how best to regulate the interface between market choice and government intervention. He discusses the need to find a middle ground between socialism and libertarianism.

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Rich in powerful insights, *Free Markets under Siege* can help us not only to understand the world better but to actually make every person in it better off—or capable of being so.

Richard A. Epstein is the James Parker Hall Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago and the Peter and Kirsten Bedford Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution. He is one of the codirectors of the Law and Economics Program at the University of Chicago School of Law.

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